Carmine Di Martino   *Editor*

Heidegger and Contemporary Philosophy

Technology, Living, Society & Science

Springer

Contributions to Hermeneutics

Volume 8

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Editor

Heidegger and Contemporary Philosophy

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Editor
Carmine Di Martino
Dipartimento di Filosofia "Piero Martinetti"
Università degli Studi di Milano
Milano, Italy

Introduction

Martin Heidegger's thought constituted from the very beginning a watershed in philosophy. Its epoch-making relevance was immediately clear and elicited significant, often opposed reactions. It left a profound trace in the entire twentieth century and its influence reaches all the way up to our present.

On the one hand, with the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, Heidegger delineated a powerful and systematic phenomenological hermeneutics of human existence, thereby creating the framework of European existentialism. Heidegger thus became the unavoidable point of reference for all subsequent philosophical inquiries in the continental field. *Being and Time* set up the horizon of problems, method, and vocabulary for all interpretations of existence that were developed after it, including those, which opposed Heidegger's approach vigorously.

On the other hand, especially after *Being and Time* and starting with *The Essence of Ground* and *What Is Metaphysics*, Heidegger developed an original and imposing vision of the whole history of Western philosophy, which reveals itself as totality governed by some fundamental presuppositions and characterized by a few decisive turning points. Such vision was so widely spread in the philosophical landscape that, in certain areas, it became canonical. Heidegger's discourse on "metaphysics," on its "end" and its "overcoming" became pervasive in Continental Philosophy especially in the second half of the twentieth century. In this perspective, the contemporary planetary homologation operated by technology would be nothing but the destined point of arrival of an interpretation of the meaning of being as presence, or presence-at-hand, which imposed itself with Plato and would coincide with philosophy itself. Thus, the ontological difference fell into oblivion, and being "as such" was forgotten. In fact, all the conceptions of being that came onto the scene in the history of philosophy interpreted being on the model of being present, that is, as principle, foundation, and cause of being present. Our time would be the age of fully developed nihilism, where, strictly speaking, nothing at all is left of being. We would only have merely present beings available to technological manipulations. Being as a whole would reveal itself exclusively as a "standing reserve" ready to be employed. Thinking would thus be responsible for the task of awaiting and prepar-

ing the advent of a turn, that is, an overcoming of nihilism and, with it, of philoso-
phy itself, which is the root of nihilism.

In the past 5 or 6 years, a new phase in the reception of Heidegger began. In
2014, the publication of the *Black Notebooks* started, which forcefully rekindled the
debates over Heidegger's political affiliation and his "ontological-destinal" transla-
tion of political events and forces within the movements of history; hence, the
"metaphysical" interpretation of the role of people, nations, cultures, religions, and
ethnic groups in their entwinement with the problem of technology and nihilism. A
lot of ink has been spilled on the content of these controversial notes (see below).
As the chapter in this volume convincingly show, among other things, some aspects
of the *Black Notebooks* have been magnified and some others have been effaced
from view. Overall, however, the publication of the *Black Notebooks* brought to
light the limits and the exaggerations in Heidegger's conception of the West and
metaphysics as the history of being, thereby subtracting Heidegger to the uncondi-
tional alternative of enthusiastic adherence and blameful rejection. In other words,
the publication of the *Black Notebooks* introduced a more appropriate distance from
Heidegger's work and invited scholars to work "with" Heidegger without thereby
necessarily identifying completely with his thought, or else, rejecting it outright.
Paradoxically, the controversial nature of the *Black Notebooks* freed Heidegger
scholars from the tendency to espouse his views completely, and in so doing it
enabled them to return in a new, more disenchanted, articulate, and diversified way
to his texts, in order to extract from them those elements that are most useful to
tackle the problems of our present.

The present volume aims to exemplify scholarship working in this direction, that
is, working "with" Heidegger, with his texts and his legacy, neither to celebrate or
despise him nor to petrify his thinking with the painstaking exegesis of the new edi-
tions of his texts, but rather in order to question and think through our present under
the fourfold prism of the keywords mentioned in the subtitle of this book: technol-
ogy, living, society and science.

There is a further distinctive trait to this volume, which is connected with the one
just mentioned. It gathers essays of scholars of Heidegger primarily working in
Italy, thereby offering a survey of the philosophical ferment surrounding Heidegger's
thought in Italy in the past few decades. This is due, among other things, to a kind
of reception of Heidegger's thought that is very different, for instance, from that of
France, to make just one illustrious comparison. In the French landscape, thanks to
figures such as Lévinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricœur (Beaufret would deserve to
be separately addressed), the first reception of Heidegger was characterized, on the
one hand, by an existentialist tendency, and on the other, by a peculiar relationship
with Husserlian phenomenology. To be more precise, and to follow the thread of
Kojève's seminars, it was the Hegel-Husserl-Heidegger triad that dominated the
French scene for a significant amount of time, together with Saussure's structural-
ism and its developments in anthropology (Levi-Strauss) and psychoanalysis
(Lacan). The Husserl-Heidegger entwinement – together with a Hegel mediated by
Kojève – constitutes a distinctive trait of the first French interpreters and dissemina-
tors of Heidegger's thought. These figures were, at the same time, original philoso-

phers with autonomous and well-defined perspectives. In Italy, by contrast, after the first period in a postwar era characterized by existentialism, Heidegger comes properly onto the philosophical scene only later, in the 1970s, particularly thanks to Massimo Cacciari, Eugenio Mazzarella (who is credited with an important editing activity of Heidegger's works in Italy), Carlo Sini, Gianni Vattimo, Valerio Verra, Vincenzo Vitiello, to name but a few, and later on Franco Volpi. These interpreters, however, adopted Heidegger as a springboard for a double distancing or liberation from the Hegelian-Marxist dialectical thought (including its Italian versions) and the Husserlian phenomenology, which had had a prominent role in the Italian philosophical landscape up to that moment. It is, therefore, a slightly different Heidegger than the one circulating in the French area. This kind of reception also gave a distinctive mark to the ensuing studies of Heidegger's thinking produced in Italy up to the present. Despite ever-increasing globalization of knowledge, the geo-philosophical peculiarities of particular hermeneutical contexts, with roots laying deep in a history made of traditions and schools, did not wane.

The contributors to this volume testify, albeit partially, to the Italian interpretive approach to Heidegger. On the one hand, they include the most immediate heirs of the first Italian reception of Heidegger. Some of them were students of the above-mentioned figures, and here they present the implications of their distinctive approach. These include Caterina Resta, Costantino Esposito, Fabio Polidori, Giovanni Gurisatti, as well as the editor. The even younger generation of scholars includes Adriano Ardovino, Stefano Bancalari, and Andrea Le Moli. They contributed to explore Heidegger's work and highlight understudied dimensions in it. Finally, the youngest generation of Heidegger's scholars represented in these pages includes Marcello Barison, Luca Bianchin, Francesca Brencio, Roberto Redaelli, and Roberto Terzi. Their work documents an interest in Heidegger that is far from fading. Last but not least, the volume features the work of two distinguished scholars from Spain and France, respectively: Jesús Adrián Escudero and Christian Sommer.

Let us then turn to the four sections of the volume: *Technology, Living, Society & Science.* It is not necessary to dwell too much on the sense of urgency that echoes in these words and on the interaction of the problems underlying them. Our age is a time of deep social transformations, which are constitutively entwined with the action of technology. By redrawing the borders between places, nations, peoples, and cultures and by globalizing markets, costumes, information, and economical flows, technology revolutionizes our way of relating to bodies and life, too, and, in so doing, it introduces unheard-of possibilities and enormous dangers. The rewriting of borders and the ongoing transformations obviously involve the human being more than ever, that is, the living being "human" in its relationship of continuity/discontinuity with other living beings on the planet, whose destiny is threatened by the very action of humans.

But how can Heidegger's thought contribute to responding to these challenges? The essays in the four volume sections –*Technology, Living, Society & Science* – not only show that Heidegger's work is still an extraordinarily rich source of suggestions and stimulations to orient ourselves in these problems; they also show that Heidegger's thought is much more present and active in our philosophical and

extra-philosophical culture than we might be inclined to admit. Not only did Heidegger grasp ahead of time many of the issues that characterize our present. He also let them emerge as genuinely philosophical issues, and he gave them names and brought them to the level of thinking, thereby tackling them in their depths and roots. This is why we often have to admit that we see such issues in the way we see them precisely thanks to Heidegger's names and questions, regardless of our agreement or disagreement with his diagnoses and perspectives.

1. *Technology*

Caterina Resta offers a penetrating reconstruction of the genesis of Heidegger's interpretation of modern technology. She shows the process of incubation, spanning 20 years, that led Heidegger, following Ernst Jünger, to the *Bremen Lectures* (1949) and the more widely known lecture *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953). Starting from Ernst Jünger's *Total Mobilization* (1930) and *The Worker* (1932), Heidegger works out an ontological status of modern technology: it does not consist in an innocuous set of instruments that people use in order to realize their goals with full mastery; rather, modern technology is a destination of being, a fateful or fated event. It is therefore impossible to reject it, even if this does not mean that we need to worship or idolize it. Caterina Resta argues that we need to respond, as Heidegger would have it, to the challenge posed by technology, that is, by heeding its hidden truth and laying bare its intrinsically totalitarian character.

In a similar vein, Christian Sommer focuses on Heidegger's profound debt to Jünger with regard to the question of technology. He points out the meaning of this indebtedness and the venues where it is most clearly documented. Moreover, Sommer shows concisely and persuasively that Heidegger's critique of technology and its metaphysical-fated character necessarily presupposes a theological component. Without such a theological dimension, the deepest meaning of Heidegger's critique would remain incomprehensible. The overcoming of technology as the overcoming of nihilism (or metaphysics, which amounts to the same) can only occur thanks to the desired advent of a new god or new gods (in the singular and in the plural). Only a god, and not a human being, can lead us to a new post-metaphysical and post-technological era, hence the famous statement "only a god can save us," which Sommer assumes as the hermeneutical perspective for Heidegger's interpretation of technology.

Roberto Terzi shows the tight connection between the topics of technology and production. Starting with *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953), Terzi considers Heidegger's analyses of production, which spanned his entire career. The result, Terzi argues, is an essential tension between two poles, on a dual level. On the first level, there is a tension between the quest for an original "pro-duction," rooted in physics, and the destruction of the very notion of production. On the second level, there is a tension between a flight from technology and the deepening of its possibilities. The most promising direction that results from the framework of these oscillations is the necessity to rethink the notion of action in a nonsubjective, that is, in Heideggerian idiom, post-metaphysical sense.

Carmine Di Martino engages critically with Heidegger's reflection on technology. On the one hand, he reconstructs the terms of Heidegger's deconstruction of the anthropological and instrumental conception of technology, endorsing its conclusion: technology is not just an instrument at our disposal, but rather a mode of revealing. On the other hand, Di Martino questions the consistency of the "historical-destinal" conception of technology, according to which humans would be like "toys in the hands of technology" due to an inscrutable "sending" of being. By contrast to Heidegger's onto-centrism, Di Martino proposes a critique of the anthropocentric view from a different perspective. What matters is not some destiny of being, but rather the originally anthropo-poietic (and revealing, in a new sense) character of technology. In this way, it is possible and necessary to re-thematize philosophically the ethical and political responsibility called for by the phenomenon of technology, without thereby falling prey to the naïveté denounced by Heidegger.

2. *Living*

Adriano Ardovino offers a painstaking and inspiring reflection on the evolution of Heidegger's thinking about nonhuman animals. Ardovino moves along the trajectory that begins with Heidegger's first phenomenology of life and the immediately ensuing ontology of existence, all the way up to the later phenomenology of the world, which leaves all ontology behind. Ardovino shows how, in the unfolding of this trajectory, two ways of considering animals are involved. In the first period, Heidegger under-determines the animal by interpreting it privatively, as a living being that is "poor in world" by contrast to the human being, who is world-forming. In the second period, Heidegger reinterprets the nonhuman animal in light of a different notion of world, which we could label "cosmological." This second notion of world, which is both pre- and post-metaphysical, constitutes a framework where anything that marks an essential distinction between human and nonhuman animal is abandoned. A new way to experience, name, and think the nonhuman animal takes hold: the "more" and "less" in the consideration of living beings disappear.

Roberto Redaelli takes a different perspective on the same issue. He focuses on Heidegger's thinking on the difference between human and nonhuman living beings from the point of view of the two modes of finitude identified by Heidegger: perishing and dying, which he attributes, respectively, to nonhuman and human animals. Readelli sets out to highlight, first the structural connection between death and language. It is by virtue of such a connection that only *Dasein* dies, properly speaking, that is, dying can only occur within the symbolic space opened up by language. Redaelli shows that Heidegger's distinction between perishing and dying, besides remaining a live option in the contemporary philosophical landscape, seems to find confirmation in recent findings of empirical science.

Fabio Polidori questions the notion of "abyss" that characterizes the human/animal relationship in Heidegger. Heidegger, in fact, writes repeatedly that the human being and the rest of living beings are divided by an abyss. And yet, according to Polidori, such a division cannot pertain to the whole dimension of the human being. Humans, too, belong to the domain of living beings. This fact excludes the possibility to accept the image of an absolutely radical abyss. What is needed is, then, a

philosophical bridge to reconnect the human and nonhuman animal. According to Polidori, such a bridge is found in "action," which, as far as humans (i.e., beings who are capable of their own death) are concerned, is always characterized by meaning. Despite its difference, human action originates in the "living being" and it is always directed at it as its target. It responds to it. It amounts to a response that comes from, and terminates in, the living being. This is the responsibility that precedes every determinate act of taking responsibility.

Andera Le Moli focuses on the Aristotelian roots of Heidegger's position on animal life. He examines first the trajectory that runs from the 1924 lecture course on *Basic Concepts of an Aristotelian Philosophy* to the 1929/1930 course on *Basic Concepts of Metaphysics*, before turning to the later stages of Heidegger's thought. Heidegger and Aristotle seem to establish a connection between an existential faculty (the *logos*) and the apparently dominant position occupied by our species; however, that humans are endowed with *logos* also means that they are able to decenter themselves and recognize the essential bond with other living beings. Humans are also the only ones who can let other forms of life appear within their purview and thereby bring them to speech, or letting them speak, insofar as they are the only living beings endowed with *logos*. This intuition leads Heidegger, starting in the 1930s, to rethink the role played by humans, but always in the framework of a deep-seated continuity with Aristotle's thought (beyond the self-proclaimed overcoming of metaphysics).

Francesca Brencio sets out to explore the dialogue between Heideggerian philosophy and medicine, with particular regard to psychiatry. Through a hermeneutical-phenomenological approach, the chapter follows Heidegger's interpretive efforts in order to understand the complex constitution of the human being, particularly when this constitution is threatened by a disease and can thus influence existence in its totality. Brencio considers mental disorders, in particular. She points out how, according to Heidegger, the various manifestations pertaining to the field of psychopathology are subject to a scientific method that reduces human behavior to elementary causal interactions and views emotional suffering from a detached and objective perspective. In Heidegger's view, understanding mental health requires a different approach, which can be summarized in the formula: from *homo natura* to *homo existential*, where the sick person, as much as the healthy person, must be viewed as always already involved in a world and nexus of social relations, that is, in a concrete historical and cultural situation.

3. *Society*

Giovanni Gurisatti problematizes the presence of the ethical dimension in Heidegger's thought. In *Being and Time*, *Dasein* attains its authenticity within a kind of self-referentiality, by contrast to the dispersion that characterizes the relational and public sphere. At this juncture, Heidegger seems to forget that *Dasein* belongs chiefly to the dimension of *koinonia*. The extent of the "repression of ethics" (Franco Volpi's coinage) in *Being and Time* is made even more evident by the contrast with Heidegger's 1924 lecture course *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* where, echoing Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetorics*,

Heidegger not only considers public ethics as a distinctive dimension of *Dasein* and *Mitsein*, but also goes on to identify its central phenomenon in the relationship between care of self (*autopoiesis*) and care of others (*heteropoiesis*). These are the very same notions that find their most renowned and important analysis in Michel Foucault's studies on ethics in the Hellenistic-Roman world.

Following the same track of the previous essay, Luca Bianchin determines the ethical implications of the structure of *Dasein* as a social being. Responding to Emmanuel Lévinas' objection, who accuses Heidegger of leaving out any serious ethical inquiry in his philosophical journey, Bianchin sets out to show that Heidegger's thinking is by no means alien to the ethical problem, even if he addresses it in a distinctive way. Bianchin explores the ontology of *Dasein* illuminated by Heidegger in his works from the 1920s, particularly the concept of care (*Sorge*) in its practical, mobile, interactive, and intersubjective dimension. If Heidegger, then, does not raise the ethical problem in ethical terms, he nonetheless poses a number of conditions and limits within which the ethical problem can be formulated. Heideggerian ontology responds precisely to this requirement, without blocking the possibility to renew our philosophical perspective in an age of great transformations, like our own.

Adrian Escudero focuses on Heidegger's political philosophy. When he became rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933, Heidegger was convinced that Germany needed a decisive change in its political direction. His 1933/1934 seminar *On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, and State* documents, in this sense, his support of National Socialism and the anti-Semite "justifications" of that time. Escudero sets out to highlight the horizon of thinking underlying this position. It is embodied in the concepts of fatherland and soil, of people and belonging, of vital and spiritual space. The rootedness in one's own soil and the bond with one's historical community become criteria for authenticity. A person's existence is essentially constituted by her belonging to a people, in this case, the German people, under a leader's guidance. Thereby, Heidegger shows to be fully in line with the academic conservatism of his time, whose objectives include the reestablishing of the historical roots of the German people along with its superiority.

Eugenio Mazzarella offers a philosophical revisitation of the *Black Notebooks*, whose publication brings under the spotlight once again two well-known and highly sensitive topics: "Heidegger and National Socialism" and "Heidegger and the Jews." Mazzarella develops his view, according to which Heidegger's history of metaphysics in its political implications is intrinsically polluted by a historical-destinal approach inherited by Hegel's idealistic philosophy[1]. Besides confirming the already known elements of Heidegger's thinking on these matters, the *Notebooks* show how Heidegger pushes his analysis toward the barren area of an "ontological-destinal" perspective, which renders his political analyses entirely fallacious, including the

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[1] See E. Mazzarella, *Introduzione* to the Italian edition of G. Neske – E. Kettering (hrsg. v.), *Antwort. M. Heidegger im Gespräch*, [Neske, Pfullingen 1988], *Riposta. A colloquio con Martin Heidegger*, Guida, Napoli 1992, pp. 5–36; and in E. Mazzarella, *Ermeneutica dell'effettività. Prospettive ontiche dell'ontologia heideggeriana*, Guida, Napoli 1993.

tragic illusion that the Third Reich would constitute a countercultural "spiritual" power by contrast to the crisis of Europe, the interpretation of the Third Reich as a mere version of machination, the imposition of technological domination on the world, among other well-known topics. Nothing is left of the seriousness of history: everything is misunderstood in the gnostic-apocalyptic awaiting a new Eon of Being, whose advent would be prepared by the collapse of history of being so far. This is a completely misleading view, which ranks far beneath the speculative dignity of the *Seinsfrage.*

Costantino Esposito highlights the problematic model of the *Black Notebooks* going over the stages in their formation between the 1930s and the 1940s. For this purpose, Esposito identifies three fundamental directions: Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism (which transitions from "barbaric," to "spiritual," to "vulgar"); the interpretation of World Judaism; the conception of modern Christianity as a figure of nihilism. The implication of these three elements provides, according to Esposito, the fundamental characteristic of the *Notebooks*. In the history of being, Judaism and Christianity are considered to be on the same side, as opposed to Greekness. For Heidegger, it would befall the Germans to recall, protect, and recast, with a new beginning of thinking, the original thinking of Greekness, which was deviated and hidden by the development of Judeo-Christian metaphysics. The *Black Notebooks* thus make more explicit Heidegger's awaiting a post-metaphysical and post-Christian age. Perhaps his eagerness to deal with a deadly blow to Judaism and Christianity constitutes a veritable and nefarious hendiadys in Heidegger's thinking.

It should be emphasized that, because of the extremely complex and controversial nature of the issues at hand, the positions concerning the *Black Notebooks* which emerge from the last two chapters of this section are the authors' responsibility only. Indeed, rather different and even opposing interpretations of the *Black Notebooks* have been proposed, among which Donatella Di Cesare's and Peter Trawny's deserve particular attention[2].

4. *Science*

Stefano Bancalari proposes an original reconstruction of the relationship between Heideggerian philosophy and science, taking his cues from an analysis of the recently published first part of the talk on *Phenomenology and Theology* (1927). Here Heidegger insists more explicitly than anywhere else on an original connection (*ursprünglicher Zusammenhang*) between philosophy and the positive sciences, and even on a consubstantiality between these two kinds of theoretical inquiry. Heidegger suggests a parallelism between theology and physics, both of which are positive sciences, and invites readers to think the relationship between physics and philosophy in terms of "ontological correlative." Bancalari refers to Carlo Rovelli's conception of the physics of time as an illusion and shows that this

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[2] See D. Di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli ebrei. I «Quaderni neri»*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2016; P. Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, Klostermann RoteReihe, Band 68, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2014; P. Trawny, *Martin Heidegger. Eine kritische Einführung*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2016.

idea of time appears perfectly understandable in Heidegger's framework, and perhaps only in it, thereby attaining a concrete verification of the hypothesis that philosophy is the "ontological correlative" of physics. This fact would speak in favor of a contamination of the two languages, rather than their opposition.

Marcello Barison discusses the relationship between thinking and world in Kant and Heidegger. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, this relationship cannot be conceived without assuming time as transcendental mediation between the field of intellectual conceptualization and the phenomenological domain of entities. In *Being and Time*, too, the relationship between *Dasein* and world is possible only through the transcendental mediation of time. *Dasein*'s original transcendence is, in fact, grounded in the ecstatic constitution of temporality. What is then the difference between Kant's and Heidegger's temporal ontologies? According to Barison, while for Kant the schema is a product of the imagination, and therefore the product of a transcendental faculty of the subject, for Heidegger the three temporal ecstasies of transcendence are simply a neutral and structural articulation of the relationship between *Dasein* and world. Since they are not a product of subjectivity, the three ecstasies of time cannot be traced back to a transcendental constitution within a consciousness.

Milan, Italy   Carmine Di Martino

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Contributors

Adriano Ardovino is a Full Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara, where he is the Director of the BA program Philosophy and Education Sciences in the Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Economics. His teaching and research interests include German Idealism, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Post-Structuralism, Aesthetic Theory, and Philosophy of Religion. He has published numerous articles on those areas as well as books and translations.

Stefano Bancalari is Associate Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Sapienza Università di Roma, Department of Philosophy, and Invited Professor at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana in Rome. He is Editor of the *Archivio di filosofia*. His research focuses on contemporary phenomenology and on the relationship between phenomenology and philosophy of religion. Among his publications are: *Logica dell'epochè. Per un'introduzione alla fenomenologia della religione* (2015), *Fenomenologia e pornografia* (2015), *Intersoggettività e mondo della vita* (2003), *L'altro e l'esserci. Heidegger e il problema del* Mitsein (1999). He is the author of many articles and edited the philosophical works of Rudolf Otto in Italian.

Marcello Barison received his BA and MA from the University of Padua (Italy). He completed his doctoral studies at the Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane (SUM) in Naples in collaboration with the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany). He is currently Visiting Professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He served as collegiate Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago between 2015 and 2019. In the academic years 2011–2012 and 2014–2015, he taught Aesthetics for Architects at the University of Ferrara. Since January 2013, he has been a visiting scholar at the Philosophy Department of Columbia University-Barnard College (New York). In addition to lectures and publications focusing on twentieth-century continental philosophy, he wrote on contemporary art, literature, and architecture.

Luca Bianchin is a PhD student in the Department of Philosophy "Piero Martinetti" at the University of Milan. He is currently a visiting student at the Husserl-Archive at the University of Freiburg. His studies focus on Heideggerian thought, especially

on Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. His last contributions are: *"Trans" or "de"? Heidegger and Jünger on Technology, Nihilism and Metaphysics* (2019) and *Uomini senza umanità. L'uomo nel contesto della "Verwindung der Metaphysik"* (2020).

Francesca Brencio is Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Seville (Spain), Convener and Instructor at the *Pheno-Lab*, *A Theoretical Laboratory on Philosophy and Mental Health,* in the Department of Psychosomatic Medicine at the University Hospital in Freiburg (Germany), and member of *The Phenomenology and Mental Health Network* at The Collaborating Centre for Values-Based Practice in Health and Social Care, Catherine's College, University of Oxford (UK). Her recent publications include "Befindlichkeit: Disposition" in *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological Psychopathology* (2019); "Words matter. A hermeneutical-phenomenological account to mental health" (with P. Bauer) in *Phenomenology and Mind*, 18, 2020. She is the Editor of volume 7 of Heidegger Handbook Series entitled *Die Grundworte von Heideggers Denken* (Verlag Traugott Bautz).

Carmine Di Martino is Professor in the "Piero Martinetti" Philosophy Department, University of Milan. His research interests include Husserl's phenomenology, Heidegger's hermeneutic, contemporary French philosophy, pragmatism, and philosophical anthropology including also its relations to current developments in scientific research. Among his most recent works are: *Viventi umani e non umani. Tecnica, Linguaggio, Memoria* (2017), *Figure della relazione* (2018), and *Il simbolismo e i suoi antecedenti* (2019).

Jesús Adrián Escudero is Tenure Professor at the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona (Spain), Part-Time Associate at the University of Phoenix (USA), and former Senior Researcher at the Humboldt Foundation (Germany). He also has been guest lecturer and professor at numerous European and American universities (Arizona, Freiburg, Padova, Milano, Münster, Puerto Rico, and Lima). Jesús is editor and translator of different Heideggerian and Husserlian texts. Among his most recent publications it is worth noting *Heidegger y la genealogía de la pregunta por el ser* (Herder, 2010), *The Emergence of the Question of Being* (2014), and the two volume *Guía de lectura de ¨Ser y tiempo¨ de Martin Heidegger* (2016).

Costantino Esposito is Professor of History of Philosophy and History of Metaphysics at the University of Bari "Aldo Moro." His main research interests are: the thought of Martin Heidegger, in particular the phenomenology-ontology link; the problem of history; the theory of nihilism; the reading of Kant, Schelling, and Augustine; the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, in particular the relationship between criticism and metaphysics; and the theological and ontological system of Francisco Suárez. His last book is *Introduzione a Heidegger* (2017).

Giovanni Gurisatti is Associate Professor of History of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology (FISSPA) at the University of Padua. He mainly works on German philosophy and aesthetics between the nineteenth and twentieth century. He has translated and edited several of Martin Heidegger's works for Adelphi. In 2020, he published a monograph dedicated to Heidegger: *Est/etica ontologica. L'uomo, l'arte, l'essere in Martin Heidegger* (2020).

Andrea Le Moli is Associate Professor of History of Philosophy in the Department of Humanities at Palermo University. He is author of several publications concerning the interpretations of classical thinking in the contemporary age, among which the books *Heidegger e Platone* (2002); *Novecento platonico* (2005); *Heidegger: soggettività e differenza* (2011); and *Platonismo e antiplatonismo da Nietzsche a Derrida* (2018). Also committed in philosophical publishing and popularization, his actual research topics include global philosophy, contemporary ontologies, life sciences, and Biocritics.

Eugenio Mazzarella is Full Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at Federico II University. He was Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the Friederician University and Member of Parliament in the 16th legislature. Among his recent works: *Vie d'uscita. L'identità umana come programma stazionario metafisico* (2014); *L'uomo che deve rimanere. La smoralizzazione del mondo* (2017); *Il mondo nell'abisso. Heidegger e i Quaderni neri* (2019); and *Perché i poeti. La parola necessaria* (2020).

Fabio Polidori teaches Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Trieste. His research addresses contemporary continental philosophy, issues related to subjectivity, language, and the posthuman in authors such as Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger, Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida, and Sloterdijk. He is on the scientific committee of several journals and editorial series. Among his publications: *L'ultima parola. Heidegger/Nietzsche* (1998); *Necessità di una illusione. Lettura di Nietzsche* (2007); *Passi indietro. Su verità, soggetto, altro* (2012); and *Dal postumano all'animale* (2019).

Roberto Redaelli is currently Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Nürnberg-Erlangen and Coordinator there of the Centre for Studies in Neo-Kantianism (CENK). He received his PhD from the University of Milan with a dissertation on the relationship between neo-Kantianism and philosophical anthropology. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Heidelberg and at the Husserl Archive of Freiburg im Breisgau. His main research focus is concerned with the notion of human subject in neo-Kantian philosophy, philosophical anthropology, and hermeneutics.

Caterina Resta   is Full Professor of Theoretical Philosophy (University of Messina, Italy). She teaches philosophy of the twentieth century. Caterina has analyzed in particular the following topics: the deconstruction of the subject (identity/otherness), the notion of human, the question of technique, and nihilism. Some of her books are: *Il luogo e le vie. Geografie del pensiero in Martin Heidegger* (1996); *Nichilismo Tecnica Mondializzazione. Saggi su Schmitt, Jünger, Heidegger e Derrida* (2013); and *La passione dell'impossibile. Saggi su Jacques Derrida* (2016).

Christian Sommer is permanent Researcher at the Archives Husserl de Paris (French National Center for Scientific Research, CNRS / École Normale Supérieure, ENS). He is the author of *Heidegger, Aristote, Luther* (2005), *Heidegger 1933* (2013), and *Mythologie de l'événement. Heidegger avec Hölderlin* (2017) and the translator of Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (2009) and Gehlen's *Der Mensch* (2020).

Roberto Terzi   is Research Associate at the Husserl Archives in Paris and philosophy teacher in French high schools (as Professeur Agrégé). He holds a Phd in Philosophy (University of Turin, 2008). He has held several postdoctoral fellowships at universities in Italy and France and in particular a "Marie Curie" fellowship at the Archives Husserl de Paris. He is the author of two books: *Il tempo del mondo. Husserl, Heidegger, Patočka* (2009) and *Evento e genesi. Heidegger e il problema di una cosmologia fenomenologica* (2016) and of several papers on the phenomenological movement and on Derrida.

Part I
Technology

The Age of the Totalitarian Domination of Technology

Caterina Resta

Abstract The almost complete publication of Heidegger's university courses and unpublished works of the 1930s and 1940s allows us to reconstruct the genesis of his reflection on modern technology. The first public statements about this subject, which date back to the *Bremen Lectures* (1949) and the famous Munich conference *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953), gave the impression of a sudden "Technical turn", but today we are able to retrace the long maturation – which lasted almost twenty years – of this theme, which would become central and dominant in Heidegger's thought, starting from the period following the Second World War. Heidegger admitted that the early reading of Ernst Jünger's *Total Mobilization* (1930) and *The Worker* (1932) played a decisive role both in his ontological conception of the technology and in his original interpretation of Nietzsche, of the will to power and nihilism, which he undertook in these years. Starting with Jünger, Heidegger was able to grasp the ontological value and totalitarian character of modern technology, which influenced the Epoch of Totalitarianism as well as the present day.

Keywords Modern Technology · Nihilism · Will to Power · Totalitarianism · Ernst Jünger

1 "Insight Into That Which Is"

Following an invitation by the wealthy Hanseatic landowners of the Bremen Club, Heidegger held a series of lectures in the city on the 1 and 2 December 1949, significantly titled *Insight Into That Which Is* [*Einblick in das was ist*].[1] This was a place

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[1] M. Heidegger, *Einblick in das was ist. Bremer Vorträge 1949*, in *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge: 1. Einblick in das was ist. Bremer Vorträge 1949. 2. Grundsätze des Denkens. Freiburger Vorträge*

C. Resta (✉)
Dipartimento di Civiltà Antiche e Moderne, Università degli Studi di Messina, Messina, Italy
e-mail: caterina.resta@unime.it

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that was "free" by tradition, and held no prejudices against the philosopher, whose reputation had been tarnished due to the "purge" he had suffered on account of his Nazi-related past. It was the first public appearance of the philosopher since the end of the Second World War. The four conferences had suggestive, somewhat sibylline titles: *Das Ding* [*The Thing*], *Das Ge-Stell* [*Positionality*, *En-framing*], *Die Gefahr* [*The Danger*], *Die Kehre* [*The Turn*]; they were delivered in the crowded Kaminsaal of the Rathaus in Bremen, in front of an audience of non-specialists, composed mostly of the wealthy local bourgeoisie, eager to attend cultural events that, inevitably, were transformed into social occasions with a certain thrill.[2] The conferences were then re-proposed the following year, and presented on the 25 and 26 March 1950, to an equally wealthy, select public at the elegant Jugendstil Sanatorium in Bühlerhöhe, located in the hills above Baden-Baden. The atmosphere during this presentation must have been strikingly similar to that which hovered over the Berghof in Davos, where Thomas Mann had set his *Zauberberg*.

Heidegger had just suffered a long and mortifying process of de-nazification at the hands of the French occupiers immediately after the end of the war, and was forcefully ousted from the University and, for the moment, barred from teaching. This was a period where he was banned from academic circles and even ostracized by old, trusted friends, such as Jaspers.[3] He had, however, seen his fame increase, also internationally, and had no qualms about addressing an audience that were ill-qualified to listen to his dizzying rhetoric. Yet, despite this, they were still irresistibly spellbound by the enchanting oratorial power of the "wizard of Meßkirch" – as he was jokingly nicknamed by his students–, who had now become, in spite of setbacks, a world star. Three years later, a far more select audience (including, among others, the Jünger brothers, Heisenberg, and Ortega y Gasset) would give him a real ovation, at the end of the famous conference *Die Frage nach der Technik,*[4] held on 18 November 1953 in the Maximum Auditorium of the

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1957, hrsg. von P. Jaeger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 79, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1994; trans. by Andrew J. Mitchell, *Insight Into That Which Is: Bremen Lectures 1949*, in *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is, and Basic Principles of Thinking*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2012.

[2] On these first public appearances of Heidegger, see: H.W. Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen. Begegnungen und Gespräche mit Martin Heidegger 1929–1976*, Societäts, Frankfurt a.M. 1983; trans. by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, *Encounters and dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 1929–1976*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1993 and R. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland. Heidegger und seine Zeit*, Hanser, München 1994; trans. by Ewald Osers, *Martin Heidegger: between good and evil*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1998.

[3] For the reconstruction of this difficult period, in which Heidegger saw his house requisitioned and had to deal with threats to confiscate his library due to his position as Rector of the University of Freiburg i.B. between 1933 and 1934, see the well-documented biographies of H. Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie*, Campus, Frankfurt 1988; trans. by Allan Blunden, *Martin Heidegger: a political Life*, HarperCollins, London 1993 and of R. Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: between good and evil*, cit.

[4] The conference was published, together with others, the following year: M. Heidegger, *Die Frage nach der Technik* (1953), in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, hrsg. von F.-W. Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 7, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2000; trans. by William Lovitt, *The Question Concerning*

Technische Hochschule in Munich, and organized by the prestigious Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste.

In these lectures, Heidegger for the first time proposed to his audience a theme – that of modern technology – that was completely unexpected, since he had never previously shown interest in the subject, with the exception of some scattered references in a few conferences, however reserved for a limited public.[5]

In Bremen, Heidegger had begun by making a specific reference to the atomic bomb[6] dropped by the Americans on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945, an event that ended the Second World War. Barely four years had passed since that catastrophic event, which had so deeply shaken international public opinion, already sorely tested by the long war. In addition, memories of the devastating carpet bombing suffered by Germany in the last phase of the conflict by the Anglo-American air forces, which had razed most of the major German cities to the ground and caused countless losses among civilians, were still fresh in the listeners' minds.[7] Bremen, in fact, like other ancient Hanseatic cities, including Lübeck and Hamburg, had suffered enormous damage due to the repeated air raids, beginning in 1940, particularly due to the use of incendiary bombs. The most destructive attack occurred between 18 and 19 June 1944, and by the end of the war 85% of the inhabited area had been razed to the ground. All that remained of Germany was a pile of rubble.

Although Heidegger had not directly experienced the most terrible aspects and destructive fury of this war – nor indeed, even of the previous one–, he however showed that he understood better than anyone else what had *really* happened. He

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Technology, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row, New York 1977.

[5] Heidegger had made significant hints at the condition of the modern and contemporary world, characterized by a growing and all-pervasive domination of computation and technical-scientific thought, in some conferences that would be published, together with others, only in 1950, ending an almost absolute "news blackout", that had lasted through the years of the Nazi regime. These included, in particular: the 1938 conference, outlining the features of the modern world, *The Age of the World Picture* [*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*]; a summary, set forth in 1943, of the prolonged engagement, undertaken by Heidegger in the years immediately preceding, with the thought of Nietzsche, interpreted in the light of the completion of nihilism, *Nietzsche's Word: "God Is Dead"* [*Nietzsches Wort "Gott ist tot"*]; and a conference, delivered in 1946, on the twentieth anniversary of Rilke's death, whose poems were interpreted in the shadow of Nietzsche's will to power, *Why Poets?* [*Wozu Dichter?*]. The collection, published in 1950, has the suggestive title *Holzwege*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 5, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1978; ed. and trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, *Off the Beaten Track*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 2002.

[6] A similar and broader reference to the atomic bomb would be made by Heidegger on the occasion of a subsequent conference held in his native Meßkirch on 30 October 1955 (M. Heidegger, *Gelassenheit*, in *Gelassenheit*, Neske, Pfullingen 1959; trans. by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, *Memorial Address*, in *Discourse On Thinking*, Harper & Row, New York 1966).

[7] On the devastating, unprecedented carpet bombing of German cities, see the extraordinary account of W.G. Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Hanser, München 1999; trans. by Anthea Bell, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, Notting Hill, London 2012.

opened his first conference in Bremen by underlining the destructive potential of the new nuclear device, which "could be enough to wipe out all life on earth",[8] and recalled the agonizing events of the recent past, as well as the threats facing the future. He concluded the introductory part of his speech by saying that: "the horrible [*das Entsetzliche*] *has* already occurred".[9] However, his declaration needed to be interpreted in a far from reassuring sense. The horrible was not the atomic bomb as a war device with an immense destructive power, but that "calculative thinking" [*rechnendes Denken*] that made it possible and that, at least since the beginning of the modern age, had been transforming the world into a gigantic gearbox whose sole purpose is to self-empower, to increase its own power of annihilation. The horrible is that the truth of Being, in the current age, takes the names of *Machenschaft* [Machination], of *Gestell* [Enframing, Positionality] and these conceal the supreme *Gefahr* [Danger].

The fact that *das Entsetzliche* has already occurred does not intrinsically mean that it is something that we have left behind. Rather, it alludes to an event that occurred long ago and that has not ceased to weigh upon us since its occurrence. Moreover, it describes the epochal horizon to which we belong and which we cannot escape. According to Heidegger, only when one succeeds in achieving an "insight into that which is" does one become able to see what the real danger is, to see what threatens both the present and the future, how it is the result of a long incubation, and that the two world wars led only to conflagration, in a particularly striking and catastrophic way. From this point of view, both the atomic bomb and all the other technological armaments used in the Second World War, on a scale that was more massive than in the First, had now made evident and tangible a *power* [*Macht*] of annihilation that everywhere had sown destruction and death: in cities reduced to rubble, in bodies disintegrated or melted like wax, by atomic and incendiary bombs, and in those reduced to ashes in the crematoriums of Nazi extermination camps. The power of Nothing annihilates everything it comes into contact with, and nothing seems to escape its *total* grip. This is why the industrious, wealthy bourgeoisie of Bremen, who, after the war, began to devote themselves to its lucrative business with renewed optimism (even "reconstruction", after all, is an ideal opportunity for speculation of all kinds), were wrong to sleep soundly, thinking that the worst was over. Heidegger, like a killjoy or a bird of ill omen, came to bring his *Dysangelium*–the bad news, as Nietzsche called it: the horrible has already occurred, but the worst is yet to come, and it does not stop coming every day, in every moment and everywhere. However, it still remains largely hidden unless we have eyes capable of looking "into that which is".

It was not only in the conferences of this period, such as those of Bremen and Munich, but especially in the numerous *Vorlesungen* dedicated to Nietzsche between 1936 and 1942, in the darkest years for the German people and for Germany, that Heidegger engaged in a solitary examination of his contemporary world. He

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[8] M. Heidegger, *Insight Into That Which Is*, cit., p. 4.

[9] *Ibidem*.

dedicated an extraordinary amount of energy to this, particularly after his ruinous "mistake" of judgement regarding National Socialism.[10] He had striven to look without filters "into that which is", i.e. into what was happening before everyone's eyes, but which remained invisible to the most. The examination had exhausted him, and this was compounded after the war, by the purge that led him to the edge of a physical and mental breakdown.[11]

2   The "Technical turn"

Yet the question remains as to why Heidegger suddenly began to talk about technology. This was not a matter of chance, as was demonstrated by the Bremen conferences, all obsessively dominated by this topic, followed, a few years later, by the Munich conference of 1953. When it was published the following year, along with other texts, a piece stood out, due to the importance of the subject. This was a series of notes dating back to the decade 1936–1946, entitled *Überwindung der Metaphysik*,[12] in which Heidegger provides us with a sort a fragmentary synthesis of his reflections on technology, and it became evident to everyone that the issue of

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[10] Faced with the now vast literature on the subject, which periodically regains momentum with the release of the many previously unpublished texts by Heidegger, I would like to highlight the following: P. Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique: Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, Bourgois, Paris 1988; trans. by Chris Turner, *Heidegger, Art and Political: The Fiction of the Political*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1990; F. Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, Laffont, Paris 1988; T. Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1992; J. Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1997; F. Fistetti, *Heidegger e la rivoluzione nazionalsocialista*, in *La Germania segreta di Heidegger*, a cura di F. Fistetti, Dedalo, Bari 2001. For an overall evaluation of the various positions of the interpreters: D. Janicaud, *L'ombre de cette pensée. Heidegger et la question politique*, Millon, Grenoble 1990; trans. by Michael Gendre, *The Shadow of that Thought: Heidegger and the Question of Politics*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1996. Another issue, recently raised by the publication of the *Schwarze Hefte*, is that of Heidegger's alleged anti-Semitism. On this subject, see D. Di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli ebrei: i Quaderni neri*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2014; trans. by Murtha Baca, *Heidegger and the Jews: The Black Notebooks*, Polity, Cambridge (UK) 2018; J.-L. Nancy, *Banalité de Heidegger*, Galilée, Paris 2015; trans. by Jeff Fort, *The Banality of Heidegger*, Fordham University Press, New York 2017; P. Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2015; trans. by Andrew J. Mitchell, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2015; *Heidegger, die Juden, noch einmal*, hrsg. von Peter Trawny und Andrew J. Mitchell, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2015; *Heidegger's Black Notebooks. Responses to Anti-Semitism*, ed. by Andrew J. Mitchell and Peter Trawny, Columbia University Press, New York 2017.

[11] In the spring of 1946, Heidegger had to submit himself for three weeks to the care of Dr. Viktor von Gebsattel, a follower of the phenomenological-existential psychoanalytic approach, at the Schloß Hausbaden sanatorium in Badenweiler, as reported in the biographies by H. Ott and R. Safranski.

[12] M. Heidegger, *Überwindung der Metaphysik*, in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, cit.; trans. by Joan Stambaugh, *Overcoming Metaphysics*, in *The End of Philosophy*, Harper and Row, New York 1973.

technology had obsessed him since the second half of the 1930s. Now that almost all the materials from the period – roughly covering the years from his resignation from the rectorate (1934) up till the first half of the 1950s[13] – have become accessible, the time has come to try to answer the question: how and why did Heidegger come to elaborate his thought on technology? When he dealt with the subject as an independent issue, both in the conferences of Bremen and Munich, it was presented as a *Frage,* at the same time both *epochal* and *essential*. However, this was merely the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, it could be said that when Heidegger held the famous conference in 1953–certainly the most important on the subject – with the significant title *Die Frage nach der Technik*, it actually marks a point of arrival rather than of departure, particularly with regards to a subject to which Heidegger had been paying increasing attention for approximately twenty years.

While Heidegger's thought on technology has been, and continues to be, the object of constant attention on the part of scholars,[14] so much so that it has become difficult to say something new on this subject, little has been written on the question: *where* did Heidegger's thought on this issue originate? Why, in the mid-1930s, did Heidegger begin to glimpse in modern technology a problem that needed to be

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[13] To this period belong: the university courses dedicated to Nietzsche, already collected and published by Heidegger himself in 1961 (M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Neske, Pfullingen 1961, 2 voll.; trans. and ed. by David F. Krell, *Nietzsche I-IV*, HarperCollins, New York 1991, 2 voll.); the 7 unpublished treatises (GA 65, GA 66, GA 67, GA 69, GA 70, GA 71, GA 72, the latter of forthcoming publication); the series of the *Schwarzen Hefte*; and the notes on Ernst Jünger (GA 90).

[14] Of the vast, perhaps excessive bibliography on the question of technology in Heidegger, I limit myself to mentioning the following: M. Ruggenini, *Il soggetto e la tecnica. Heidegger interprete "inattuale" dell'epoca presente*, Bulzoni, Roma 1977; E. Mazzarella, *Tecnica e metafisica. Saggio su Heidegger*, Guida, Napoli 1981; J. Loscerbo, *Being and Technology: A Study in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, Nijhoff, The Hague 1981; P. Fandozi, *Nihilism and Technology: A Heideggerian Investigation*, University Press of America, Washington 1982; W. Schirmacher, *Technik und Gelassenheit: Zeitkritik nach Heidegger*, Alber, Freiburg i.B.-München 1983; G. Seubold, *Heideggers Analyse der neuzeitliche Technik*, Alber, Freiburg i.B.-München 1986; S. Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und an der Technik*, Niemeyer, Tübingen 1989; M.E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1990; W. Lovitt, and H. Lovitt Brundage, *Modern Technology in the Heideggerian Perspective*, Edwin Mellen, Lewiston 1995; N.A. Corona-B. Irrgang, *Technik als Geschick? Geschichtsphilosophie der Technik bei Martin Heidegger: Eine Handlungstheoretische Entgegung*, Röll, Dettelbach 1999; S. Zenklusen, *Seinsgeschichte und Technik bei Martin Heidegger. Begriffsklärung und Problematisierung*, Tectum, Marburg 2002; T. Platte, *Die Konstellation des Übergangs: Technik und Würde bei Heidegger*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 2004; R. Rojcewicz, *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger*, SUNY Press, Albany 2006; B.W. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to* Gelassenheit, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2007; H. Ruin, *Ge-stell: Enframing as the Essence of Technology*, in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. by Bret W. Davis, Acumen, Durham 2010; D. Ihde, *Heidegger's Technologies. Postphenomenological Perspectives*, Fordham University Press, New York 2010; S. Gorgone, *Nel deserto dell'umano. Potenza e* Machenschaft *nel pensiero di Martin Heidegger*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2011; *Heidegger on Technology*, ed. by Aaron James Wendland, Christopher Merwin and Christos Hadjioannou, Routledge Taylor & Francis, New York 2019. I would also like to refer to C. Resta, *Nichilismo Tecnica Mondializzazione. Saggi su Schmitt, Jünger, Heidegger e Derrida*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2013.

confronted? It is these questions that I would like to try to answer. This has become possible also thanks to the publication of a whole series of previously unpublished writings which, as we said, allow us to enter Heidegger's "workshop" during those years. Understanding how the question concerning technology made its way into Heidegger's thought will also mean giving a new meaning to the "Turn" [*Kehre*] that occurred in the 1930s. If, as Heidegger himself clarified, rather than as a change of course, in discontinuity with his previous work, it is to be understood as a "hair-pin bend", like those encountered on mountain roads, then the "Turn" not only indicates a "sharp turn" away from the existential phenomenology of *Dasein* to the *Seinsfrage*, but the twist represented by the *Frage des Seins*, thus becoming a *Frage nach der Technik*, in the light of the *Seinsgeschichte* that Heidegger was working on in those years. For all these reasons, the *Kehre* proved to be a real "Technical turn".

What determined this turn and made Heidegger's *Denkweg* veer toward the elaboration of an *ontology* of technology[15] and, at the same time, of a consequent interpretation of Nietzsche and nihilism, was his decisive encounter with Ernst Jünger, whose *Die totale Mobilmachung*[16] and above all *Der Arbeiter*[17] Heidegger read immediately after their publication. These were the texts that determined a real "Technical turn" in Heidegger's thought, as he himself did not fail, in retrospect, to admit:

> Your essay *The Worker* [*Der Arbeiter*] (1932) has provided a description of European nihilism in its phase following the First World War. This essay develops from your treatise *Total Mobilization* [*Die Totale Mobilmachung*] (1930). The figure of 'the worker' belongs to the phase of 'active nihilism' (Nietzsche). The action of work consisted–and with a transformed function continues to consist – in making visible, through the figure of the worker, the 'total work-like character' of all that is actual. Nihilism, at first merely European, thereby appears in its planetary tendency. […] The fundamental experience that sustains and traverses your representation and depiction arose from the materiel battles of the First World War. Beings as a whole, however, show themselves to you in the light and shadow of the metaphysics of the will to power, which Nietzsche interprets in the form of a doctrine of values.
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> In the winter of 1939–40 I discussed *The Worker* among a small circle of university teachers. People were astonished that such a clear-sighted book had been available for years, and that they themselves had not yet learned even to venture the attempt to let their

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[15] It is at this level that Heidegger's analysis is intended, as clearly expressed at the outset of *Die Frage nach der Technik*: "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological [*Die Technik ist nicht das gleiche wie das Wesen der Technik*]" (M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, cit., p. 4). Through this kind of approach, Heidegger aimed to differentiate his thought on technology from a merely anthropological-instrumental conception or a sociological perspective.

[16] E. Jünger, *Die Totale Mobilmachung* (1930), in *Essays I: Betrachtungen zur Zeit, Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.7, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1980; trans. by Joel Golb and Richard Wolin, *Total Mobilization*, in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Richard Wolin, The MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1993. *Die Totale Mobilmachung* first appeared in the 1930 anthology *Krieg und Krieger*, hrsg. von Ernst Jünger, Junker und Dünnhaupt, Berlin 1930.

[17] E. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt* (1932), in *Essays II: Der Arbeiter, Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 8, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1981; trans. and ed. by Bogdan Costea and Laurence Paul Hemming, *The Worker: Dominion and Form*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2017.

view of the present move within the optics of *The Worker* and to think in planetary terms. […] You will permit me to reproduce a note that I made during this attempt to elucidate your book […]: 'Ernst Jünger's text *The Worker* is important because, in a different way from Spengler, it achieves what all Nietzsche literature thus far has been unable to achieve, namely, to impart an experience of beings and the way in which they are, in the light of Nietzsche's projection of beings as will to power […]'. 'The Question concerning Technology' owes a lasting debt to the descriptions in *The Worker*.[18]

Based on this declaration, we can therefore deduce that, in the *Auseinandersetzung* with Jünger,[19] at least three fundamental lines of Heidegger's thought: (1)

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[18] M. Heidegger, *Zur Seinsfrage*, in *Wegmarken*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 9, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1976; trans. by William McNeill, *On the Question of Being*, in *Pathmarks*, ed. by William McNeill, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1998, pp. 294–295. This was Heidegger's "reply", which originally appeared in 1955 under the title *Über „die Linie"* in the *Festschrift* for the sixtieth birthday of Jünger, who, in 1950, in a similar circumstance and with the same title (but without the quotation marks), had offered his paper to the collection of writings in honor of Heidegger. Similar observations are found in the defense, written by Heidegger in 1945 after the war, to clear himself of the accusations of connivance with the Nazi regime, and these were made public for the first time in 1983: "In the year 1930 Ernst Jünger's article on 'Total Mobilisation' („*Die totale Mobilmachung"*) had appeared; in this article the basic features of his book *The Worker* („*Der Arbeiter"*), which appeared in 1932, announced themselves. Together with my assistant Brock, I discussed these writings in a small circle and tried to show how they express a fundamental understanding of Nietzsche's metaphysics, in so far as the history and present of the Western world are seen and foreseen in the horizon of this metaphysics. Thinking from these writings and, still more essentially, from their foundations, we thought what was coming, that is to say, we attempted to counter it, as we confronted it. […] Later, in the winter 1939/40, I discussed part of Jünger's book *The Worker* once more with a circle of colleagues; I learned how even then these thoughts still seemed strange and put people off, until 'the facts' bore them out" (M. Heidegger, *Das Rektorat 1933/34. Tatsachen und Gedanken* (1945), in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (1910–1976)*, hrsg. von H. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 16, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2000; trans. by Karsten Harries, *The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts*, in *The Self-Assertion of the German University and The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts*, "Review of Metaphysics", vol. 38, 3, 1985, pp. 484–485).

[19] While focusing above all on the theme of nihilism, the decisive importance of the encounter between Heidegger and Jünger has not escaped some scholars: cf. E. Mazzarella, *Assiologia e ontologia del nichilismo. Su Jünger e Heidegger*, in *Storia Metafisica Ontologia. Per una storia della metafisica tra Otto e Novecento*, Morano, Napoli 1987; M. Cacciari, *Ernst Jünger e Martin Heidegger*, in *Ernst Jünger. Un convegno internazionale*, a cura di P. Chiarini, Shakespeare and Company, Napoli 1987; G. Figal, *Erörterung des Nihilismus. Ernst Jünger und Martin Heidegger*, "Etudes Germaniques", 4, 1996; G. Seubold, *Martin Heidegger Stellungnahme zu Jüngers „Arbeiter" im Spiegel seiner Technikkritik*, in *Titan Technik. Ernst und Friedrich Jünger über das technische Zeitalter*, hrsg. von F. Strack, Königshausen & Neuman, Würzburg 2000; P. Trawny, *Heidegger und „Der Arbeiter". Zu Jüngers metaphysischer Grundstellung*, in *Verwandschaften*, hrsg. von G. Figal-G. Knapp, *Jünger-Studien*, Bd. 2, Attempto, Tübingen 2003; C. Gentili, *Heidegger tra Nietzsche e Jünger: la questione del "grande stile"*, in *Martin Heidegger trent'anni dopo*, a cura di C. Gentili, F.-W. von Herrmann e A. Venturelli, il melangolo, Genova 2009; S. Gorgone, Machenschaft *e metafisica del lavoro: Heidegger legge Jünger*, in *Nel deserto dell'umano*, cit.; P. Amato, *La morte (Heidegger-Jünger)*, in *Il nichilismo e le forme. Ernst Jünger a confronto con Nietzsche, Heidegger, Benjamin, Schmitt*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2014. I have already focused on this relationship in C. Resta, *Heidegger e il tecnototalitarismo planetario*, in *Nichilismo Tecnica Mondializzazione*, cit..

"technology" does not refer to a set of machines or instruments man uses to operate in the world, but becomes the name that designates, on the *ontological* level, the way in which Being unveils itself in the era of fulfilled nihilism. Technology, tracing our *epochal* horizon, gives its mark to the *totality* of beings, making them conform to it. (2) Nietzsche[20] is the one who, thinking of life as *Wille zur Macht*, did not offer a merely *biologistic* conception; on the contrary: saying that life is *will* to power means that it does not aim at mere preservation, but pursues constant overpowering and self-increase. Thus, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* can only be understood in the light of Jünger's *Arbeiter*: he is *Homo technicus*, whom Heidegger also calls, with clear reference to Jünger, "the laboring animal [*das arbeitende Tier*]"[21] or "the technologized animal [*das technisierte Tier*]".[22] For this reason, Nietzsche's philosophy is placed by Heidegger at the *end* of the history of metaphysics, representing its greatest unfolding, and leading its nihilistic vocation to fulfillment. The will to power is *command* that pursues *total* dominion through the computation of the real: Technology. (3) However, there is still a third aspect, no less important, closely linked to the two previously mentioned. It was already hinted at in the courses dedicated to Nietzsche, but today is even more evident due to the publication of his unpublished writings. On the basis of these assumptions, Heidegger engaged in, after his resignation, a close *Auseinandersetzung* with National Socialism, revealing its intrinsically nihilistic character. It is in this context that Heidegger's controversial adhesion to National Socialism should be placed and evaluated. His first "mistake" consisted of *political* naivety and the presumption of "riding the tiger" of the National Socialist movement; of claiming, even, that he was able to "guide" it, a view that began with the overall rethinking of the role and mission of the German University. His second mistake, even more serious because it concerned the *philosophical* plane, was the conviction that National Socialism was able to respond to the epochal challenge of the confrontation with technology.[23] Heidegger would acknowledge the first mistake by resigning as Rector of the University of Freiburg after only one year; he would realize the latter gradually, precisely through his engagement with the work of Jünger, through which he would also find the

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[20] On Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche cf. O. Pöggeler, *Friedrich Nietzsche und Martin Heidegger*, Bouvier, Bonn 2002; R. Casale, *L'esperienza Nietzsche di Heidegger tra nichilismo e Seinsfrage*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2005; a particularly penetrating analysis is offered by M. Haar, *La fracture de l'Histoire. Douze essais sur Heidegger*, Millon, Grenoble 1994.

[21] M. Heidegger, *Overcoming Metaphysics*, cit., p. 87.

[22] M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie. (Vom Ereignis)*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 65, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1989; trans. by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2012, p. 78.

[23] It is in this light that we should read the controversial statement appearing in brackets in the definitive edition of the *Introduction to metaphysics*: "All this calls itself philosophy. In particular, what is peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of National Socialism, but which has not the least to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement [namely, the encounter between global technology and modern humanity], is fishing in these troubled waters of 'values' and 'totalities'" (M. Heidegger, *Introduction to metaphysics*, cit., p. 213).

fundamental coordinates of his own interpretation of Nietzsche, eventually arriving at an *ontological* conception of technology.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that, without the decisive encounter with Jünger's work, which took place between the 1930s and 1940s, Heidegger would probably not have found the right tools to actuate this decisive "Technical turn", a key factor that would open up new paths to his *Denkweg*.

3 In the Shadow of Jünger (And Nietzsche)

Certainly, Heidegger was among the very few contemporaries to understand the *philosophical* purport of Jünger's writings. A hero of the First World War, after having achieved fame with his war diary *In Stahlgewittern,*[24] during the stormy years of the Weimar Republic, Jünger became the ardent promoter of a "new nationalism", a position that was riskily close to the nationalistic ideals that were so widespread at the time in Germany. These would coagulate around the National Socialist movement, without, however, identifying with it. Jünger was therefore appreciated, mostly, as a war writer and, later, as an author of numerous articles attesting to his political radicalism. It was on a different level, however, that Heidegger intended to engage in discussion with him, discovering that no one more than this brave combatant had fully *sensed*, if not entirely *understood*, what Nietzsche had called the "uncanniest of all guests"- Nihilism, in its new guise, that of technology.

Indeed, Jünger had been able, like no other, to apply the "insight into that which is", that is to *see* the annihilating power of technology at work on the battlefields of the First World War, something which turned combat into a battle of matériel [*Materialschlacht*]. He was also able to identify in the Soldier-Worker the new Figure of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. Going far beyond the debate on modern technology, which had found its elective land in Germany since the early twentieth century, reaching its climax in the interwar period, Jünger managed to see the *metaphysical* aspect of technology, allowing Heidegger to evaluate this phenomenon no longer only on the anthropological or sociological level, but on the *ontological* level. After the publication of the copious notes that accompanied his reading of Jünger's texts, there can no longer be any doubt regarding the extent of that "radical confrontation [*Auseinandersetzung*]"[25] that Heidegger had engaged in with him and of the considerable debt he owed to Jünger.

However, according to Heidegger, it is in the shadow of Nietzsche that Jünger's writings should be read: he "is the only true successor of Nietzsche; his writings make the writing so far produced 'on' Nietzsche inessential and superfluous",[26] not

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[24] E. Jünger, *In Stahlgewittern* (1920), in *Tagebücher I: Der erste Weltkrieg*, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 1, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1978; trans. by Michael Hofmann, *Storm of Steel*, Penguin, London 2004.

[25] M. Heidegger, *Zu Ernst Jünger*, hrsg. P. Trawny, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 90, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2004, p. 242.

[26] Ivi, p. 227.

only because Nietzsche himself became "more comprehensible through Jünger"[27] – and this would be the interpretative approach Heidegger himself used in his interpretation of Nietzsche – but primarily because Jünger was the only one able to grasp the ontological-metaphysical aspect of the will to power, recognizing that, in the present era, it assumes the form of *total* technical domination over all beings. If life is, for Nietzsche, the will to power, then Jünger, unlike the racist interpretations in vogue, of which National Socialist ideology also made extensive use, interprets it not in a *biologistic* way, but as a *technological* power that is affirmed on a planetary scale. As Heidegger recognized, Jünger had succeeded in gaining this perspective regarding the link between life, the will to power and technology on the battlefields of the First World War through the direct experience of war, not in the sense of *Erlebnis*, but "in the context of truth of Nietzsche's metaphysics".[28] Although he did not have *The Will to Power* in his backpack, Jünger "was *hit* by fire and blood, by death and work, by the silence and thunder of the battle of matériel *as manifestations of the will to power*".[29] He, according to Heidegger, was the *only one* able to recognize in it the essence of this first *total* war and to call it Work [*Arbeit*], i.e. Technology, its particular *way* of affirming itself, as he was able to recognize in the Soldier–the human "type" of Nietzsche's active nihilist, a new Figure of *Übermensch*, who wears the uniform of the Worker, that is, of the Technician. This was a concept which Jünger gradually arrived at and which reached its full maturation in his masterpiece of 1932, *Der Arbeiter*, which, soon after its publication, provoked many misunderstandings, as Heidegger emphasizes:

> The term 'Worker' identifies in a metaphysical-anthropological key the Form *of* humanity that is fulfilled definitively in the taming of the being as a whole, whose being is currently 'will to power'. The word 'Worker' therefore is not to be understood as a conceptual term for a representation that limits itself to extending to a universal dimension a phenomenon already known, the so-called 'social class' and category of 'workers'. […] 'Work' and 'Worker' are metaphysical concepts. It is the 'Worker' the soldier and, likewise, the 'thinker' […] because they, by resisting the being as a whole as will to power, *are*, each in his own way, this being. Jünger calls the attitude of this resistance "heroic realism.[30]

The exceptional merit that Heidegger acknowledges to Jünger consists therefore not of the extraordinary heroism he showed at the front, for which he was awarded the highest honor, the prestigious cross of the order "Pour le Mérite", established by Frederick the Great, but in the fact that "everywhere, with cold and penetrating eyes, Jünger sees the being as will to power. […] Starting from the essential experiences of the First World War, Jünger sharpened, stiffened and expressed the Nietzschean project of the world [*Weltentwurf*], developing an independent vision of that fundamental manifestation of the world as will to power".[31] Drawing from the military lexicon the expression "total mobilization" [*totale Mobilmachung*] and giving it a

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[27] Ivi, p. 214.

[28] Ivi, p. 217.

[29] Ivi, p. 218.

[30] Ivi, p. 227.

[31] Ivi, pp. 227–228.

metaphysical value, Jünger intends to refer not only to the war, but to a *total* mobilization of the being through which

> all human and non-human forms of violence are brought to fulfilment and, above all, made mobile; they are also kept available through unitary conduct. […] War is only a modality, albeit somewhat pervasive and harrowing, of 'total mobilization', since this is not confined only to the military sphere, nor, in general, to the state of war. In its essential claim of unconditionality, it completely dominates the humanity of the whole globe.[32]

This "total mobilization", to which Jünger gives the name of Technology, is none other than the expression of a will to power that *wants* only itself, that is the immeasurable increase and overpowering of itself. What Nietzsche had previously declined in psychological-physiological terms, leaving himself open to biologistic and racial interpretations, Jünger manages to *see* as the technological unleashing of a power that does not pursue any other goal beyond the overpowering of itself. It appears as the name of Being in the era of fulfilled nihilism. Precisely because "the power is always overpowering, annihilation belongs to it; and this is why the processes of destruction necessarily grow in the gigantic, that is, where the being as a whole, in the sense of total mobilization, deploys the pure essence of power".[33] From this point of view, those who hold and implement this power cannot in any way consider themselves its Lords, but only its obedient Servitors, being "those who are most rigidly constrained in chains and subjected to the purest slavery by the essence of power".[34] Yet in the other, not less important, aspect of the technological mobilization of the world is its *total*[35] nature. Jünger gives this adjective the same meaning that, on the military level, had been given to it by the German general Ludendorff, talking about "Total War" [*totaler Krieg*], to denote its difference and further extremism with respect to the "Absolute War" [*absoluter Krieg*] hypothesized by Clausewitz. While, on the political level, the "Total State" would be the direct consequence and reflection of *total* war, destined to become radicalized in Hitler's Totalitarian State, on the *metaphysical* level, as the deployment of the pure essence of power, mobilization is *total* in that it pervades *all* beings: nothing can escape capture and no other end can be achieved by it above and beyond the further overpowering of itself. As Heidegger observes:

> The essence of power does not tolerate any scope other than power. There is therefore no territory that, as other than power, can be imposed on it as its 'end'. Power does not need any end, and therefore we cannot even say that it is without an end – it is overpowering of its essence, and nothing but this.[36]

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[32] Ivi, p. 228.

[33] Ivi, p. 229.

[34] *Ibidem*.

[35] On the relationship between totality and totalitarianism that is implicated in the Jüngerian concept of technology, cf. S. Gorgone, *Totalität und Totalitarismus*, in *Strahlungen und Annäherungen. Die stereoskopische Phänomenologie Ernst Jüngers*, Attempo, Tübingen 2016.

[36] M. Heidegger, *Zu Ernst Jünger*, cit., p. 229.

Therefore, the sole purpose is that of the "complete and unconditional domination,"[37] of the *totality* of the being as a whole. From this point of view, that is, on the *metaphysical* plane of the same will to power, which appears in the guise of technological dominion, one understands better how, on the basis of Jünger, Heidegger believes he can standardize the then-predominant *ideologies* and consider their *apparent* divergences, which will push them to a second, more destructive world war, as a mere facade: "The current state communities – democratic, fascist, Bolshevik–, and their mixed forms, are facades [*Fassaden*]".[38] As we can also see in the university course of 1935, he states that: "In America and Russia, then, this all intensified until it turned into the measureless so-on-and-so-forth of the ever-identical and the indifferent, until finally this quantitative temper became a quality of its own".[39] The dimension that predominates in them is that of a desolate leveling, one which is caused by the reduction of everything to extension and number. This would be a recurring motif in all the writings of the 1930s and 1940s, whose Jüngerian nature Heidegger explicitly acknowledged in his defense brief of 1945: "What Ernst Jünger thinks with the thought of the rule and shape of the worker and sees in the light of this thought, is the universal rule of the will to power within history, now understood to embrace the planet. Today everything stands in this historical reality, no matter whether it is called communism, or fascism, or world democracy".[40] It is in this light that we should therefore interpret what must have been somewhat disconcerting for the readers of the famous *Brief über den „Humanismus"*, whose first draft was dated 1946, and which was then published the following year. After underlining that the most interesting aspect of Marxist materialism consists of "a metaphysical determination according to which every being appears as the material of labor",[41] grasping in this the epochal and destinal character of technology, in the light of the history of Being, Heidegger noted:

> No matter which of the various positions one chooses to adopt toward the doctrines of communism and to their foundation, from the point of view of the history of Being it is certain that an elemental experience of what is world-historical speaks out in it. Whoever takes 'communism' only as a 'party' or a 'Weltanschauung' is thinking too shallowly, just as those who by the term 'Americanism' mean, and mean derogatorily, nothing more than a particular lifestyle.[42]

However, this also applies to National Socialism which, like communism and Americanism, takes its cue from the same metaphysics of work and is considered, like other ideologies, an expression of the same nihilism.

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[37] Ivi, p. 230.

[38] Ivi, p. 231.

[39] M. Heidegger, *Introduction to metaphysics*, cit., p. 48.

[40] M. Heidegger, *The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts*, cit., p. 485.

[41] M. Heidegger, *Brief über den „Humanismus"*, in *Wegmarken (1919–1961)*, hrsg. von F.-W. von Herrmann, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 9, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1976; trans. by Frank A. Capuzzi, *Letter on "Humanism"*, in *Pathmarks*, ed. by William McNeill, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1998, p. 259.

[42] *Ibidem*.

Again, it is through Jünger that Heidegger, after having cited the concise formula of Lenin, according to which socialism (i.e. communism) means "Soviet power + electrification", identifies precisely in technology the founding *metaphysical* assumption:

> So, then, in the hands of a few, the manipulation and implementation of total mobilization proceed towards complete technicization. 'Electrification' is only here the name for the highest form of technological taming of the forces at play that has just been achieved, and indicates at the same time that for 'socialism' the definitive fulfilment of technology and its domination are everything.[43]

In conclusion, through his *Auseinandersetzung* with Jünger, Heidegger understands not only the *epochal* value of Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* and *Übermensch*, but also that the war, both the first and the second, assume their global and *total* nature as *phenomena* of total mobilization, i.e. the unfolding of the will to power as technology. It is also in the same light that we must interpret the clash between world powers that, behind the *political* "facade" of communism, of Nazi-Fascism, and of Americanism, conceal the same adhesion to the "totalitarianism" of technology.

4   The Totalitarianism of Technology

At this point, it is certainly clearer how what we called the "Technical turn" in Heidegger's *Denkweg* occurred, and how it could have happened following the meeting with Jünger. While, initially, Heidegger would use the term "machination" [*Machenschaft*][44] to translate the conjunction of total mobilization and will to power into his personal lexicon, he would later, starting with the Bremen Lectures, coin the term "*Ge-Stell*" [enframing, positionality] in order to name the essence of technology as the meeting [*ge-*] of the various modes of placing [*stellen*]. However, the thought of technology, which is the foundation of this new word, used by Heidegger from 1949 onwards and which would become the *Grund-Wort* of the 1953

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[43] M. Heidegger, *Zu Ernst Jünger*, cit., pp. 230–231. A similar reference is also found in M. Heidegger, *Parmenides* (1942/43), hrsg. von M.S. Frings, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 54, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1982; trans. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, *Parmenides*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1992, p. 86, in which, after having quoted the Leninist formula "Bolshevism is Soviet power + electrification", Heidegger comments on it thus: "Bolshevism is the 'organic', i.e., organized, calculating (and as +) conclusion of the unconditional power of the party along with complete technization. The bourgeois world has not seen and in part still does not want to see today that in 'Leninism', as Stalin calls this metaphysics, a metaphysical projection has been performed, on the basis of which in a certain way the metaphysical passion of today's Russians for technology first becomes intelligible, and out of which the technical world is brought into power".

[44] For an accurate and articulated analysis of this term, which is central in Heidegger's treatises of the 1930s, through which he intends to refer to technology as a manipulative "doing" [*machen*], we refer to the work of S. Gorgone, *Nel deserto dell'umano. Potenza e* Machenschaft *nel pensiero di Martin Heidegger*, cit.

conference, remained in fact that which he had developed in his twenty-year engage-ment with the work of Jünger.

The defeat of National Socialism (but the same could be said about communism, whose collapse Heidegger was unable to witness) did not eradicate what, in all respects, we may call the "totalitarianism" of technology.[45] Indeed, in the post-war era, it appeared more pervasive than ever, being able to change its skin, moving from total mobilization through war's work of death, to the total mobilization of the reconstructive work of peace, from the blood pact forged with totalitarian Nazi-Communist ideologies, to connivance with the western liberal democracies, which Heidegger collectively called "Americanism".

While the collapse of "ideological" totalitarianism marks the definitive defeat of the idea of a *political* government capable of *guiding* total mobilization that stems from a political ideology, we can limit ourselves to observing that in our present, in the age of the technological-economic globalization of the world, where the veil of ideologies has definitively fallen, the will to power can now be expressed in all its destructive violence, through technology, which *directly* takes *command*. Technology that, as has now become evident, assumes the task of imposing its *total* dominion *directly* over the entire globe, finally free from any ethical-political-legal or ideo-logical restraints. This concerns the devastation of the environment, as well as the economy, in the age of financial capitalism, bio-technologies and Artificial Intelligence.

While ideological totalitarianism was based on a frightening personal constraint, one that was implemented through terror and propaganda, the new techno-totalitarianism pursues its aim of consumption and of wearing down the totality of beings, through an all-pervasive control of all the spheres of existence. It however uses much more seductive and persuasive systems, such as to induce the masses, by now completely depoliticized, to consent "spontaneously", even joyfully, to the loss of their most basic freedom, and live with relief from responsibility and decisions which, in turn, are becoming increasingly anonymous and impersonal and, pre-cisely for this reason, also inscrutable. Totalitarianism, in its extreme form of post-ideological technological nihilism, can finally become a "normal condition" for the historical humanity of our time.

The era of *total* global technological domination, therefore, not only marks the *end of philosophy*, but also the *end of politics* – as Heidegger understood–, which is forced to *serve* the techno-economic interests that nowadays impose their dominion *directly* without opposition and without intermediaries, particularly through the technical and economic *command* of computation. Politics now only serves as pro-paganda and apologetics: as a mere 'persuasive' cover and collector of consensus for increasingly obscure technical-economic interests. For its part, technology is never *neutral*, since it is already constitutively pre-disposed, as will to power, to a violent politics of power and robbery, which will be all the more effective, the more

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[45] For a further development and broader articulation of this concept, see C. Resta, *Heidegger e il tecnototalitarismo planetario*, in *Nichilismo Tecnica Mondializzazione*, cit.

it pursues objectives and interests that are not extrinsic to it. The new Lords of the Earth will be the Lords of Technology, those able to put themselves at the service of this planetary, totalitarian power, which will then launch its final attack on both the Earth, sacking and devastating it, along with its inhabitants.

The *animal rationale* is transformed into the technologized animal, while the being-at-work names the new truth that the era of technology reveals, also "fixing" the essence of man: "The laboring animal [*das arbeitende Tier*] is left to the giddy whirl of its products so that it may tear itself to pieces and annihilate itself in empty nothingness".[46] What characterizes *homo technicus* above all else is therefore *self-annihilation*, a sinister propensity to self-destruction.

Technology, insofar as it is a challenge [*Herausforderung*], requires from nature its resources, in the mode of ordering [*Bestellung*], as a standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. Ordering [*Be-stellen*] is done by computation, by virtue of which the earth is *commanded* to present [*dar-stellen*] itself. This mandatory 'presentation' forces the earth to make itself available for our unlimited exploitation. This is why Heidegger would call the non-technological essence of technology *Ge-stell*, in the sense of the meeting [*Versammlung*] of the different ways of placing [*stellen*], through which man requests and provokes the real. The fact that the real now presents itself as a standing reserve [*Bestand*] involves the transformation of beings from objects to reserves of materials and energies that are available to us, *usable*, and ready for use and consumption. Technology is this imperious command that violently attacks the earth in its *totality*, for the sole purpose of enhancing its power, and therefore is completely indifferent to the catastrophic and destructive outcomes of its devastating work. All this does not concern the fate of a people or a continent alone: as already Jünger had noted, in addition to its *total* nature, technology also has a *planetary* nature – today we would say *global* – that goes beyond geo-historical boundaries, unifying the earth in a single, *universal* language. While technological power unveiled its destructive character in the wars of matériel [*Materialkriege*] of the first half of the twentieth century, then conversely the violence of an unconditional will to power has become the truth of technology, even in peacetime.

Yet, if the *total* nature of Work as technology is the truth of the twentieth-century totalitarianisms, their exit from the stage of history leaves even more freedom to technical totalitarianism, now emancipated from any ideological protection. As has been rightly observed, "Nazism has passed, but technological totalitarianism remains",[47] and we need to deal with it daily.

Heidegger therefore invites us to effect an "insight into that which is" and to see the horrible [*das Entsetzliche*] that it holds within itself. No one was able to think about the essence of technology more radically, acknowledging it as having an *ontological* status, which goes beyond the instrumental anthropological conception, whereby it would simply be an inoffensive set of tools that man uses in view of the realization of his own ends and over which he would have full mastery. We have

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[46] M. Heidegger, *Overcoming Metaphysics*, cit., p. 87.

[47] M. Haar, *La fracture de l'histoire*, cit., p. 217.

seen, on the contrary, that this conviction is illusory. If the essence of technology is nothing technical, it means that technology names the truth of Being as will to power, which is destined in our time, in which it becomes the *single*, the *only* uniform of possible thought and life, at the same time universal, global and total. As Heidegger repeatedly stated, precisely because technology is assigned and destined to us as an epochal event, it is not possible to demonize or reject it, *nor*, on the other hand, should we worship it idolatrously. Rather, it is a matter of knowing how to respond to the challenge [*Herausforderung*] that is posed by technology, listening to its hidden truth: understanding the fact that, by pursuing the *total* domination of beings – including man – it is the new totalitarianism of our time.

(translated from the Italian by Simon Tanner)

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The Perfection of *Gestell* and the Last God. Heidegger's Criticism of Techno-Nihilism

Christian Sommer

Abstract In this paper, I am going to focus on two aspects of Heidegger's thought on the question of technology. (1) Heidegger's reflection on the question of technology is constituted, at least partially, by his deconstruction of Ernst Jünger's book *The Worker* during the 30s. Heidegger will develop three themes, related to his debate with E. Jünger, in his post-war works (especially in the conference of 1953 *The Question concerning Technology*). The themes concern: technology as machination (*Machenschaft*), animated by will to power; technology as truthful unconcealment, and finally, the equation technology = metaphysics. (2) Heidegger's criticism of technology presupposes a "theological" component – which we shall highlight – without which the ultimate meaning of Heidegger's criticism remains unintelligible. The overcoming of technology as overcoming of nihilism (metaphysics) is possible only thanks to the originary experience or wished arrival of a new god or gods (singular and plural). As for Heidegger, "Only a god can save us". This means that only a god, and not a human being, can bring us to a new beginning and open up the post-metaphysical and post-technological era.

Keywords Heidegger · technology · metaphysics · nihilism · Ernst Jünger · Friedrich Georg Jünger · Hölderlinean theology · new god

In order to frame Heidegger's thought on the question of technology within the contemporary philosophical debate, I believe it would be necessary to achieve a better understanding of the specific nature of Heidegger's reflection on this topic. First, we need to identify exactly *which* Heidegger we intend to consider in these contemporary debates – while supposing, moreover, that this "contemporaneity" we are referring to is easy to identify. Here, I shall just propose a sort of "archaeological" reading, which could help us to exhume some fossils of Heidegger's thought on the question of the technology of the last century. I will not inquire whether Heidegger's

C. Sommer (✉)
École Normale Supérieure/PSL, Archives Husserl de Paris, CNRS, Paris, France
e-mail: christian.sommer@ens.fr

reflection is still conceptually valid today; although it is legitimate, I shall leave aside this kind of question for further debate.

In this paper, I am going to focus on two aspects – actually two hypotheses – that, in my opinion, need to be considered, especially if we are interested in Heidegger's thought on the question of technology. (1) The first aspect, or first hypothesis: Heidegger's reflection on the question of technology is constituted, at least partially, by his deconstruction of Ernst Jünger's book *The Worker*. (2) The second aspect or second hypothesis: Heidegger's criticism of technology presupposes a "theological" component – which we shall highlight – without which the ultimate meaning of Heidegger's criticism remains unintelligible.

1 The Metaphysical Essence of Technology (Heidegger as Reader of Jünger)

Before focusing on Heidegger's reading of Ernst Jünger's *The Worker,* (*Der Arbeiter*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, Bd. 8/II, 2000 trans. by B. Costea and L. Hemming, The Worker, Northwestern University Press, Evanstone, 2017), I would like to say something more about Ernst Jünger's younger brother Friedrich Georg Jünger and his book *The Perfection of Technology* (*Die Perfektion der Technik*, Frankfurt/M., Klostermann, 2010), since we can find within it several themes that will also be Heidegger's, especially in the 1950s. I think that *The Worker* of 1932 and *The Perfection of Technology* of 1944 should be read conjointly as a unique text (as the work of two Siamese twins, so to speak). In fact, the title that Friedrich Georg will choose for his book, from the 1946 edition, is a direct quotation from § 50 of Ernst's *The Worker*: "The perfection of technology is nothing other than one of the hallmarks for the completion of total mobilization in which we are involved" (*The Worker,* 121) ["Die Perfektion der Technik ist nichts anderes als eines der Kennzeichen für den Abschluss der Totalen Mobilmachung, in der wir begriffen sind" (*Arbeiter*, 182)]. The "perfection of technology" indicates the passage from a dynamic State, defined as "revolutionary", to a new and stable (utopic) one.

This "revolutionary" aim has to be underlined. In his work of 1932, E. Jünger wrote that "in technology we recognize the most effective, the most incontestable means of total revolution" (*The Worker*, 114) ["In der Technik erkennen wir das wirksamste, das unbestreitbarste Mittel der totalen Revolution" (*Arbeiter* 173)]. The means of the revolution, the start of a total movement, is in the hands of the worker. Technology is, indeed, described by E. Jünger in § 44 of Second Section of *The Worker* as, "the manner in which the form of the worker mobilizes the world". (*The Worker*, 105) ["Die Technik ist die Art und Weise, in der die Gestalt des Arbeiters die Welt mobilisiert" (*Arbeiter*, 160)]. The diagnosis of a technological mobilization is restated by F. G. Jünger in *The Perfection*: "Technology spells the mobilization of everything which was immobile heretofore. Man too has become mobilized. He not only follows automatic motion without resistance; he even wants

to accelerate it still more." ["Die Technik ist eine Mobilmachung alles Immobilen. Und auch der Mensch ist mobil geworden, er folgt ohne Widerstand der automatischen Bewegung, ja er möchte sie beschleunigt sehen" (*Perfektion*, 144)].

The distinctive feature of *The Perfection of Technology* is that it can be read, so to speak, as an "ecological" reinterpretation of *The Worker*, since it criticizes the technological and rational super-exploitation (*Raubbau*) of the resources of the planet: "Since technology is based upon the mining of resources and since its progress spells the progressive pillage of the earth, it is obvious that in a state of perfection it will practice the most complete and the most intensive exploitation on a planetary scale, a mining of all its resources in the most rational manner." ["Da die Technik den Raubbau voraussetzt, da ihr Fortschritt von einem zunehmenden Raubbau begleitet ist, so leuchtet ein, dass sie im Zustand ihrer Perfektion auf die umfassendste und intensivste Weise Raubbau treiben wird, einen Raubbau, der planetarisch organisiert ist und in der rationalsten Weise ausgeübt wird" (*Perfektion*, 157–158)].

To break the vicious circle of what can be called the "regressive progress" of technology, F. G. Jünger suggests that we should transform our relationship with our planet, by re-considering the ancient figure of *terra mater*, "Mother Earth", and encouraging a return (in Nietzschean terms) to its proper meaning. "The Earth needs man as a healer, a curator [*Pfleger*] and a shepherd [*Hirt*]. We must learn again how to treat the Earth as a Mother. Only then, we could thrive in her". ["Die Erde bedarf des Menschen als eines Pflegers und Hirten. Wir müssen wieder lernen, sie wie eine Mutter zu behandeln. Dann werden wir auf ihr gedeihn"] (*Perfektion*, 363). Those who forget their status of "children of the Earth", as F. G. Jünger specifies, find themselves on, "a dead Cartesian globe that, since it is only a dead sphere, can be freely exploited without any regard" ["…auf dem cartesianischen Globus, der tot ist und als tote Kugel rücksichtslos vernutzt werden kann"] (*Perfektion*, 363).

I will leave aside these very interesting analyses of *The Perfection*, which represent the continuation, as well as the reinterpretation of *The Worker*, in ecological terms. However, we are going to find some of their traces in Heidegger's thought on technology in the '50s. For the moment, I will mainly focus on Heidegger's destructive interpretation of *The Worker*. The notes and drafts on *The Worker*, gathered in GA 90 (*Zu Ernst Jünger*, 2004), were elaborated in the span of time between 1934 and 1954. The interpretative paradigm that guides them is the following: Heidegger pinpoints the fact that Jünger's blind spot is his un-reflective Nietzschean inspiration, which is at least not sufficiently elaborated in its metaphysical presuppositions. (GA 90, 132). I will not spend much time on this issue, but I refer the reader to the nine points of Heidegger's criticism of Jünger's metaphysical blindness (*Blendung*) (see, GA 90, 13–15).

Jünger's reflection on technology and the paradigmatic figure of the worker receives Heidegger's harsh criticism. The figure (*Gestalt*) of the worker represents for Jünger a "metaphysical" principle; however, it is not explicitly understood as such. Jünger certainly sees that the metaphysical principle of the worker, who presides over the technological process, is not itself anything technological. In other words, as Heidegger would say later in other texts, technology is by no means any-

thing "technological". In *The Worker*, Jünger notes that, "work is not a technical activity. That our technology indeed delivers us decisive capabilities is indisputable, but it is not them that transform the face of the world, but rather the specific will which stands behind them" (*The Worker*, 58) ["...Arbeit keine technische Tätigkeit. Dass gerade diese unsere Technik die entschiedenen Mittel liefert, ist unbestreitbar, aber nicht sie verändern das Gesicht das Welt, sondern der eigenartige Wille, der hinter ihnen steht" (*Arbeiter*, 94)]. Jünger considers technology (as a phenomenon and an epoch) as a bicephalous phenomenon, as a "Janus face" (*The Worker*, 109; *Arbeiter*, 163): technology is, at the same time, a dynamic artefact (a time-space entity in transition) and a static system still to come – likewise the Total State that is, in its turn, the State of the "perfection" of technology.

According to Heidegger, while criticizing Jünger's attempt to grasp – with a stereoscopic view (*Das abenteuerliche Herz*, 1929, 63) – the double nature of technology (its present and future), in order to realize (*verwirklichen*) a "total dominion" (*totale Herrschaft*), (*The Worker*, 123; *Arbeiter*, 181) through a total and destructive overturning (the revolution), the figure of the worker represents only a type of subjectivity whose essence is the certitude of *ego cogito*. For Heidegger, this corresponds to the calculative subject, which as "will to power", finds its "last truth" of being in the mathematized and calculative object. Hence, for Heidegger, Jünger remains just on the surface of the question of the phenomenon of technology; he does not see in depth its fundamental nature, or better, its proper "truth". As Heidegger notes:

> Technology is not a mode of mobilization, but rather the grounding [*Grund*] of its truth (the possibility of the being of the worker and its working activity), given that technology is grounded on the 'certitude' of the production process, which represents [*vorstellende Herstellung*] beings as makeable (machination [*Machenschaft*]) (GA 90, 80).

From this perspective, the worker is merely an absolute slave exalted as an absolute master; he is "the modern and voluntary executioner of technology, as planning, disciplining and calculating security or insurance [*Sicherstellung*] of the entire dimension of beings (including man) in its disposability [*Machbarkeit*]". In sum: "The 'worker' and the absolute subject of the whole anthropomorphism. This means: the essential sway [*Wesung des Seins*] of Being as machination [*Machenschaft*]" (GA 90, 6).

Hence, for Heidegger, Jünger's figure of the worker represents the figure of the consummation of the age of technology as metaphysics. Accordingly, he sees Jünger as Nietzsche's successor: the thinker of the consummation of metaphysics. Furthermore, Heidegger reads the figure of the worker as another version of the Nietzschean figure of the *Overman*, and, consequently, as the consummation of the figure of modern subjectivity, understood in terms of "will to will" and "will to power".

Thus, Jünger's thought itself is an expression of "will to power". However, this is something that he himself cannot see, even if he posed Nietzsche's "will to power" as the last principle of the technology (the process of technologization). Jünger was actually the first to underline the "power-character" of technology, "when all eco-

nomic and progressive elements are stripped away" (*The Worker*, 111) ["innewohnender Machtcharakter", "unter Ausschluss aller wirtschaftlichen und fortschrittlichen Elemente" (*Arbeiter*, 169)].

According to Heidegger's reading, Jünger would have been incapable of going beyond his own metaphysics; that is, he would have been incapable of developing a metaphysics of metaphysics, able to overcome metaphysics itself. A kind of overcoming that has always been eminently one of the central purposes of Heidegger's project – as we can read more or less clearly between the lines of Heidegger's notes on Jünger and more explicitly elsewhere. Heidegger's project of "overcoming metaphysics" is also intended to be a project of an overcoming of the epoch of technology towards the possibility for "another beginning" (*der andere Anfang*).

Far from announcing a post-metaphysical "other beginning", for Heidegger, Jünger's "heroic realism", as the last step of metaphysics, represents nothing else that another version of the consummation of metaphysics, which brings us to a constantly propagating desertification and annihilation. Similarly, the age of the technological worker is not a new one, but rather the consummation of modernity, within and by the destruction that it brings (GA 90, 197).

I have decided to dedicate some words to Heidegger's seminars on *The Worker*, given that Heidegger, from Jünger's deconstruction of metaphysics, as presented in *The Worker*, had drawn some important "results" and conclusion that he will discuss and develop more profoundly later, within his more famous post-war texts on the question of technology, especially in his famous conference of 1953. Now, I will mention three strictly intertwined results that will help us to gain a better understanding of Heidegger's criticism of technology. Technology can be thought of as (1) machination (*Machenschaft*), animated by will to power, (2) truthful unconcealment and (3) finally, the equation technology = metaphysics.

The concept of *Machenschaft*, which is not Jünger's, has been elaborated by Heidegger himself within his interpretation of Jünger (also developed in other contemporaneous texts and essays, such as *Beiträge zur Philosophie* : GA 65, 126 ; 108. *Contributions to Philosophy*, 88, 76 and ff). In this term, that I have provisionally translated as machination, we have to include, in addition to the idea of an active production (*machen* : *Macht*), the idea of the artifice or trick, as well as that of a mechanization of everything that can be mechanized – as we can read in F. G. Jünger (see *Perfektion*, 66).

The principle that governs this kind of *Machenschaft* is the will to power. Thus, the will to power presents the same paroxysm that characterizes the unconcealment of the essence of technology, its truth, understood in terms of "letting see". Technology is a kind of unconcealment and, consequently, also a kind of dissimulation: what it reveals, at the same time, it also conceals. What it shows us, in this paradoxical way, is its essence, namely what is about to come (the future). In other words, its "meaning", as Heidegger says elsewhere. By virtue of this, we can say that Heidegger, with the Jünger brothers, considers modern technology as an apocalyptic kind of unconcealment.

Later, after the Second World War, Heidegger will abandon the term *Machenschaft*, and will prefer to replace it with the term *Gestell* or "enframing", "device" (or also

"computational capturing device", if I am allowed to propose my interpretation). As we know, Heidegger develops the notion of *Gestell* during the conference in Bremen, in 1949, and in some of his other works at the beginning of 1950, including his famous conference *The Question Concerning Technology*. I should briefly recall that Heidegger's notion of *Gestell* does not come out of the blue, but rather resulted from the conceptual effort of many thinkers who were trying to elaborate a general concept to indicate the essence of technology. For example, in those years, Arnold Gehlen spoke of industrial techno-science in terms of an automatic super-structure (*Superstruktur*) (Gehlen, *Seele*, 39; *Der Mensch*, section 36 – added in the '50s); Günther Anders in his *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* evokes the devices-system as a "macro-device" (*Makrogerät*) that constitutes our technological world.

Heidegger's notion of *Gestell* implies a double aspect: it enslaves the human being and contributes to his alienation, so that he becomes a "functionary of technology"; but also, at the same time, it offers him a renewed relationship with Being, This is a recurrent scheme in Heidegger. However, while waiting for the revolution to come, Heidegger can just describe to us the fact that kind of "enframing" or "device" that is supposed to conceal the possibility of the revolution itself.

For Heidegger, modern technology reduces nature to a techno-morphological object, namely a mathematised object conceived in terms of calculation, always ready-at-hand for human beings' manipulation and exploitation. Nature, within this technological objectifying process – as Husserl would say, within this "technologization"– is challenged, *gestellt*, "provoked" and "enframed". Nature is no longer perceived as spontaneous growth, likewise the Greek *physis*, but instead as a possible matter of production freely available for human beings' productive process. For this issue, I refer the reader to the well-known analyses presented by Heidegger in *Die Frage nach der Technik* (1953), in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 24–25. *The Question Concerning Technology*, (1953), 23–24.

This "circuit" of production, which renders universally available every entity (what is there – the *Gestell*), and which is by no mean technological (using Heidegger's recurrent formula), is the essence of modern technology, namely the mode of its essential sway as a determined unconcealment of beings. Technology is a figure of truth, a kind of unconcealment, of letting-see beings as mathematized objects. This determined unconcealment, specifically modern, that unconceals beings while dissimulating their proper Being, is nothing else than what Heidegger calls "metaphysics".

For Heidegger, in fact, modern technology is the consummation of metaphysics: technology is by no means technological, but still, it belongs to metaphysics. This is what we can already read, for example, in Heidegger's seminars on Jünger and in *The Age of the World Picture*, in 1938. If the technological interpretation of being, which reduces beings to something techno-morphological, takes its place within the history of metaphysics, that is because the essence of modern technology is "identical" (*identisch*) with the essence of metaphysics (*Die Zeit des Weltbildes* (1938), in *Holzwege*, 1952, 69, *The Age of the World Picture* in *Off the Beaten Tracks,* 57). Hence, metaphysics is not primarily a system of doctrines but a technological mode of interpreting and perceiving beings. "The boundless domination of modern tech-

nology, in every corner of the planet, is only the latest result of an ancient interpretation of the world – an interpretation otherwise called metaphysics." ["Die schrankenlose Herrschaft der modernen Technik in jeder Ecke dieses Planeten ist nur die späte Folge einer sehr alten technischen Auslegung der Welt; welche Auslegung sonst Metaphysik heist", (GA 52 [WS 1941/42], 91). According to Heidegger, the technological interpretation of the world finds its origin with Plato and finds its culmination in Nietzsche and Jünger's "will to power", which can be thought of as the inversion of Plato's doctrine. The danger connoted in modern technology as the essence of metaphysics is, so to speak, that of keeping us far from and blind to the question of Being, obliging us to conceive beings as always ready to hand and available mathematized objects for our purposes. The danger of falling into the abandonment of Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*) and, simultaneously, becoming blind to this very abandonment, is what Heidegger calls the danger of "forgotteness of Being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*).

2   "Only a god can save us"

I would like, now, to introduce a further aspect of Heidegger's criticism of technology as metaphysics. This aspect is the "theological" dimension that – although not broadly and explicitly expressed in Heidegger's notes on Jünger or in other exoteric texts on technology – is implied in Heidegger's criticism of technology after 1930.

Heidegger refers to this "theological" dimension in his *Das Rektorat 1933/34*, a retrospective self-justification and self-interpretation, drafted in 1945, in which he quotes Nietzsche's motto "God is dead". Here, after a mention regarding his seminars on Jünger's *The Worker*, Heidegger specifies that the effective reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of "will to power", which allows us to see "what there is", can also be expressed by Nietzsche's motto "God is dead". This means that the transcendent world, the world of the Christian God, has lost "its effective real (*wirkende Kraft*) power throughout History" (GA 16, 376).

The presence of a "theological" dimension in Heidegger is also revealed, during one of Heidegger's last interviews in 1996, by his famous sentence "Only a god can save us", (*Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*): this sentence, perhaps somewhat pathetic, means: only a god can save us from the present time of technological nihilism. This god can be also called "The last god", according to the terminology used in *Beiträge zur Philosophie.*

In the *Beiträge* we find, indeed, the first original germs of Heidegger's "esoteric" or else "hermetic" criticism of technology (there is no need, here, to say any more about the arcana of Heidegger's work, especially when these have been published and have thereby become public since 1989). I intend to focus on this text only to retrieve some useful hints to frame Heidegger's criticism of technology and, especially, to point out the relationship between the criticism of technology and theology that can be traced in Heidegger. I have just said "theology", but it would be better to say "a-theology" since Heidegger's understanding of god and godhood relies on

apophantic theology or so-called negative theology, which denies its object while announcing it.

I will not be very specific on this topic; but I shall at least sketch out those aspects that implicitly work in the background of Heidegger's criticism of technology, conceived as nihilism and consummation of metaphysics. I believe that it is necessary to clarify these aspects for one main reason: Heidegger's criticism represents the most powerful and influential criticism of technology of the last century, and if we intend to criticize it, first of all, we need to fully and properly understand it.

To summarize Heidegger's project, we can say: the overcoming of technology as overcoming of nihilism is possible only thanks to the originary experience or wished arrival of a new god or gods (singular and plural). As for Heidegger, it is worth repeating, "Only a god can save us". This means that only a god, and not a human being, can bring us to a new beginning and open up the post-metaphysical and post-technological era.

In §57 of *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Heidegger notes that "The abandonment of Being is the ground and thus also the more originary and essential determination of that which Nietzsche first recognized for the first as nihilism." (*Contributions to Philosophy*, 83) ["Die Seinsverlassenheit ist der Grund und damit zugleich die ursprünglichere Wesensbestimmung dessen, was Nietzsche erstmals als Nihilismus erkannt hat" (GA 65, 119)].

In § 58, Heidegger gives us a triple characterization of this *abandonment of Being* – the main symptom of which is nihilism. There are three characteristic determinations of the concealment and dissimulation of the abandonment of Being: acceleration, calculation and massiveness. One of the consequences of this abandonment of Being is Jünger's "total mobilization" as *Machenschaft*. Now, the age of technological nihilism is characterized by the fact that it provokes and maintains, but especially represses, the "death of God", correlated with what Heidegger calls with Hölderlin the "flight of the gods". In § 56 Heidegger makes this correlation, and lists the elements that characterize the *Seinsverlassenheit:*

"The specific elucidation of the abandonment of Being as derangement of the West; the flight of gods; the death of the moral, Christian God; its reinterpretation (cf. Nietzsche's remarks). The mask of this uprooting by the groundless newly beginning self-finding [*Sichselbstfinden*] of man (modernity)" (*Contributions to Philosophy*, 83) ["Die besondere Verdeutlichung der Seinsverlassenheit als Zerfall des Abendlandes; die Flucht der Götter; der Tod des moralisch christlichen Gottes; seine Umdeutung (vgl. die Hinweise Nietzsches). Die Verschleierung dieser Entwurzelung durch das grundlose, aber vermeintlich neu anfangen de Sichselbstfinden des Menschen (Neuzeit); diese Verschleierung überglänzt und gesteigert durch den Fortschritt" (GA 65, 118.119)].

The proper meaning of the motto "God is dead" becomes clearer only if we take into account Nietzsche's exclamation from § 19 of *The Antichrist*, "Almost two thousand years and not a single new god!". Nietzsche outlines the consequence of these two sentences ("God is dead" and "Almost two thousand years and not a single new god!") in another fragment – contemporary to *The Antichrist* – that has been included in his reflections on the "history of the concept of god": "And how many

new gods are still possible!" In fact, for Nietzsche, the announcement of the death of God also corresponds to the promise of a new dawn, as we can read in §343 of *The Gay Science*: "hearing the news that 'the old God [*der alte Gott*] is dead', we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel illuminated by a new dawn".

To prepare for such a new dawn within the horizon of the "death of God" and "flight of the gods", Nietzsche's complaint ("not a single new god") together with an injunction (how many new gods are still possible!) seems, so to speak, to lead Heidegger, echoing Nietzsche, to gesture towards "re-divinization" according to a program that we could call "theo-poietic" or, when it comes to gods, "theoi-poietic", understood as a "theio-poietic" or "poietic" of the "godhood", namely the creation of a new god or gods.

In the 1930s, Heidegger notes or seems to regret, within the asthenic nihilism of the death of God, an "interruption" of the theo-poietic or theo-gonic power (*gott-schaffende Kraft*). Now, Heidegger suggests that this theo-poieic impossibility or incapability properly indicates the need for a new god or gods, and he exhorts us towards a new "invigoration" that would offer the "overcoming of nihilism", as suggested in § 72 of *Beiträge*: "The preparation of the overcoming of nihilism begins with the fundamental experience that man as founder of Da-sein is *used* (*gebraucht*) by the godhood of the other god *Gottheit des anderen Gottes*), but what is most imperative and most difficult regarding this overcoming is the awareness of nihilism" (*Contributions to Philosophy,* 98). ["In der Grunderfahrung, dass der Mensch als Gründer des Da-seins *gebraucht* wird von der Gottheit des anderen Gottes, bahnt sich die Vorbereitung der Überwindung des Nihilismus an" (GA 65, 140–141)]

In this regard, Heidegger in section XVIII (*Götter*) of *Mindfulness* (*Besinnung* (1938/39)) states: "Only via a fundamental overcoming of all metaphysics and its ground will the possibility of a 'time-space' be created wherein the godhood of god arises out of the swaying of be-ing" (*Mindfulness*, 213). ["Erst durch eine wesentliche Überwindung aller Metaphysik und ihres Grundes wird die Möglichkeit eines Zeit-Raumes geschaffen, in dem die Gottschaft der Götter aus der Wesung des Seyns entspringt" (*Besinnung*, 241)].

Thanks to the possibility of this specific space-time dimension, the new gods will be taken away from the empire of technological beings and machination (*Machenschaft*), since they will be directly connected, post-onto-theo-logically, to Being itself. Thus, according to Heidegger, the very history of technological metaphysics, conceived of as "onto-theology", is the reason why the arrival of the new gods could not happen for two millennia.

We may note that Heidegger's diagnosis of nihilism as the age of modern technology, in which gods are absent and Being is forgotten, represents the implicit but functional premise, for Heidegger, to prepare the return of the gods. We shall understand this "preparation" towards the overcoming of nihilism (and technology) as the "preparation" for the return of the gods, but primarily, for the advent of the enigmatic "last god"- *letzter Gott*. The "last god", which Heidegger mentions in the exergue of section VII of *Contributions* (entitled "The last god"), is a "totally other" god – *alter deus* et *deus absconditus* "over against" all the other gods.

Hence, we might say that in 1966 Heidegger was still waiting for the "last god" to come, when he claims, "only a god can save us" … from the age of planetarian technology. For this salvation to be possible, a "turn" within the present time must happen. We can notice in Heidegger, and I conclude on this remark, the presence of an apocalyptic logic of the revolution, mentioned earlier, as the logic of a necessary "turning point" to Being at the heart of danger itself, as in Ernst Jünger, for example. But for Heidegger, this revolution of Being or the truth of Being is the necessary condition for the arrival of a new god. As Heidegger holds in *The Turning* (*Die Kehre*): "In the coming to presence of danger there comes to presence and dwells a favour namely, the favour of the turning about of the oblivion of Being into the truth of Being" (*The Question Concerning Technology*, 44). ["Im Wesen der Gefahr west und wohnt eine Gunst, nämlich die Gunst der Kehre der Vergessenheit des Seins in die Wahrheit des Seins", (GA 11, 120)]. This is probably suggesting to us how we should read the often recalled verses of Hölderlin's *Patmos* (in its first version of 1803): "But where the danger is, grows/The saving power also", quoted by Heidegger in *The Question Concerning Technology* (*The Question Concerning Technology*, 28; GA 7, 29). But, above all, we also have to recall the two previous verses:

The god
Is near, and hard to grasp.
Nah ist
Und schwer zu fassen der Gott.
But where the danger is, grows
The saving power also.
Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst
Das Rettende auch.

(Translation by Giulia Lanzirotti)

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Technology and the Ambiguity of Production

Roberto Terzi

Abstract The conference *The Question Concerning Technology* closely links the themes of technology and production. The article aims to reconstruct the analyses that Heidegger, in the whole of his work, dedicates to the question of production. An essential oscillation thus emerges, between the search for originary production, rooted in the *physis*, and the destruction of the concept of production itself, between an escape from the technology and a deepening of its possibilities. The most fruitful direction that emerges from Heidegger's analyses opens up to the idea of a post-metaphysical and non-subjective concept of acting.

Keywords Technology · Production · Art · Action

1 Technology and Poiesis

The concept of production brings us face-to-face with one of the most constant and apparently most obvious facts of our experience, a fact that is worthy of philosophical examination precisely due to its apparent obviousness: there are objects on the earth ("products") that are not the result of a natural process, but rather a result of human action. Conversely, a large extent of human action consists precisely in *production*, that is, in the creation and bringing new, diverse objects into existence (instruments, edifices, artworks or technical artifacts). Consequently, a significant part of the sense of human existence lies in this activity, and realizes itself in its products – in the activity of production and its results – and it could also involve a love for its works, as Aristotle writes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> [...] being (*einai*) is to all people something worthy of choice and love, and we exist by virtue of actuality (*energheia*) (that is, by living [*zen*] and acting [*pratting*]); and the product is, as it were, the producer in actuality, so he is fond of his product (*ergon*), because he is fond of his own existence. And this is natural, since what he is in capacity, his product reveals in actuality.[1]

R. Terzi (✉)
Académie de Créteil/Archives Husserl de Paris (ENS/CNRS), Paris, France

Indeed, it is to Aristotle that we owe the first truly important philosophical conception of this topic, through the concepts of *poiesis* (production) and *techne*, where *techne* is the virtue and "knowledge" that is proper to *poiesis*—and Aristotle's analyses were indubitably of crucial importance to Heidegger. But what is here at stake in the question of production is only the notion of activity and the realization of human action as conceived by Aristotle? Furthermore, does production always rest at human disposition, in such a way that man derives pleasure from production, and from the result of realizing its potentiality? Does not the love of being discussed by Aristotle bring production to a more proper ontological dimension? Would it not also include a matter, then, of distinguishing between essentially different forms of production?

The question of production – in constant dialogue with its corresponding Greek concepts – constitutes one of the most constant threads in the trajectory of Heidegger's thought on either side of the so-called "turn," from the beginning of the 1920s up to the 1950s and beyond— at the same time, it is also one of the most intricate and overdetermined threats. As is well-known, the principal axis of the famous lecture "The Question Concerning Technology" (1953) is precisely constituted by the essential relation between the themes of production and technology. After an initial critical analysis of what he understands to be the then-current conception of technology (one that he considers "anthropological" and "instrumental"), Heidegger changes the playing field by returning to the Greek notion of *poiesis*, introduced by a definition offered in Plato's *Symposium* and of which Heidegger provides an interpretive translation in his own terms: "Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiesis*, bringing-forth [*Her-vor-bringen*]."[2] This translation already elucidates the way in which Heidegger interprets the concept of *poiesis*: what is essential in it and in *techne* is not instrumental action of "making and manipulating,"[3] but rather the ontological-manifestational movement that brings a being from hiddenness to disclosure and thus to presence.[4] By occasioning the passage from hiddenness to unconcealment, *poiesis* is a mode of disclosure, of truth as *aletheia*: to produce something means to bring matter and form together "with a view to the finished thing envisaged as completed,"[5] to determine the modalities of fabrication, and to lead to presence the thing in question, revealing it according to the four causes as indicated by Aristotle, which Heidegger interprets as the "modes of occasioning" or

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[2] M. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, GA 7, p. 12: "Jede Veranlassung für das, was immer aus dem Nicht-Anwesenden über- und vorgeht in das Anwesen, ist poiesis, ist Her-vor-bringen"; "The Question Concerning Technology," trans. William Lovitt, pp. 307–342 in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 317. (Heidegger's original texts are quoted according to the *Heideggers Gesamtausgabe*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M., with the abbreviation GA followed by the no. of the volume).

[3] GA 7, p. 14; ibid., 319.

[4] GA 7, p. 13; ibid., p. 317: "Bringing-forth brings out of concealment into unconcealment (*Das Her-vor-bringen bringt aus der Verborgenheit her in die Unverborgenheit vor*)".

[5] GA 7, p. 14; ibid., 319.

bringing-forth.[6] Such an ontological and manifestational character concerns itself with the whole field of Greek *techne*, which, unlike our term, and as Heidegger points out, includes handicraft as well as art in the sense of "fine art." However, Heidegger takes things a step forward in his "ontologizing" interpretation, affirming that in reality *poiesis* thus understood does not only relate to handicraft and art, but also *physis* itself - nature: "*Physis* also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, *poiesis*. *Physis* is indeed *poiesis* in the highest sense. For what presences by means of *physis* has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself."[7] *Physis* itself is thus production, to the extent that it is able to bring beings to a state of unconcealment and thus to presence, having in itself the principle of its own movement and consequently its own production, its own bringing-forth.

At this point, Heidegger's analysis proceeds in the form of two fundamental argumentative moves. Firstly, Heidegger extends this ontological, truth-based, manifestational interpretation to modern technology and, more precisely, to its essence, *Gestell* or "enframing": this is the central and well-known thesis of the lecture, according to which technology is not simply a human instrument and a form of human activity, but also a mode of unconcealment, of the truth of Being. *Gestell* as the essence of technology constitutes the final figure of the historical destining of Being and thus dictates the way in which Being itself, and with it every being, reveals itself by keeping itself concealed in the modern era. Secondly, Heidegger distinguishes and contrasts the two productive and technological modalities that are the *poiesis* of antiquity and modern technology: "And yet the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiesis*," but rather "is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such."[8] In other words, while the ancient *poiesis* leads to the unveiling of things in their finitude, following the manifestational movement rooted in the presencing of *physis* itself, contemporary technology provokes and defies nature, commanding it to provide the energy and power, both of which need to be extracted and harnessed: the field work of the farmer who sows his seeds in the earth becomes mechanized agriculture, and a river becomes merely something to be provoked and forced to provide energy to the hydroelectric plant.

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[6] GA 7, p. 13; ibid., p. 317.

[7] GA 7, p. 12; ibid.*,* 317.

[8] GA 7, p. 15; ibid., 320.

2   The Destruction of Metaphysical "Production"

The aforementioned view should be well known to readers of Heidegger, and for some, this might be glaringly "obvious," given their reliance on a series of rather fundamental elements of Heideggerian thought: the valorization of the Greek origin of the thought as opposed to contemporary technology, one that works through an ontological and "truth-based" (in the sense of *alêtheia*) interpretation of the Greek concepts in question, and one that culminates in the concept of *physis*, in which Heidegger sees one of the fundamental words of Greek thought, on the condition that it be understood not as "nature" in a restricted sense of the term, but as a name for Being itself. What we would like to establish, however, is that in truth, there is nothing obvious about Heidegger's argument, even and especially within Heidegger's oeuvre itself. The question of production, as first mentioned in the Grecian notion of *poiesis* and *techne*, constitutes a central thread of Heideggerian thought, but what one finds in Heidegger is first of all a "destruction" or "deconstruction" of these notions, rather than a simple valorization that might serve to erect them as a positive model against contemporary technology. In other words, in Heidegger, the destruction of metaphysics as the forgetting of Being and the unquestioned primacy of constant presence can also be viewed as a critique of the primacy of the productive attitude in Greek thought, and more generally, in Western thought. This primacy has led to the formation of the categorial apparatus of metaphysics itself.

This thesis finds its expression especially in the texts of the 1920s. In particular, it will be found within the texts concerning Aristotle and in the 1927 course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. In what is known as the "Natorp-Bericht," Heidegger asserts that Aristotle, in the elaboration of his ontology, is implicitly guided by a sense of Being that has its roots in the everyday dealings with the world. This sense of Being is what emerges in the productive attitude:

> The domain of objects supplying the primordial sense of being was the domain of those objects *produced* and put into use in dealings. Thus the word-which this primordial experience of being aimed at was […] the world encountered in going about dealings that produce, direct themselves to routine tasks, and use. What *is* amounts to what has been finished and made ready in the movement of going about the dealings of production, i.e., what has come into a being-on-hand and is now available for certain tendencies to use it. Being means *being-produced* […][9]

"Being" for Aristotle means being-produced, as something that has been led from non-being to being through the process of *poiesis*. In this way, being presents itself

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[9] M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation). Ausarbeitung für die Marburger und die Göttinger philosophische Fakultät* [= *Natorp-Bericht*], in *Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zu Ontologie und Logik*, GA 62, p. 373; "Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation (1922)," trans. John van Buren, pp. 111-146 in *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to* Being and Time *and Beyond*, ed. van Buren (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), quote on 127-128.

as being endowed with form and stability, having become ready-to-hand and "substantial," – formally speaking, an *ousia*. The process of production has its end in a being that is stable and ready-to-hand, and is thus the origin of the understanding of Being which is known as *Vorhandenheit*, or subsistence, which characterizes traditional ontology.

If this is the ontological status of the resulting product, then the process of production runs its course through the use and the implicit pre-understanding of what will become two fundamental conceptual pairs in metaphysics. First, there is the distinction between essence and existence. The entire second chapter of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* is aimed at showing that "the two concepts *essentia* and *existentia* are an outgrowth from an interpretation of beings with regard to productive comportment, and indeed with regard to a productive comportment that is not expressly and explicitly conceived in this interpretation."[10] In this case, the essential point of reference is once again provided by an analysis of *techne* in Aristotle, who, in *Metaphysics Zeta*, 7, asserts: "[…] from art (*techne*) proceed the things of which the form (*eidos*) is in the soul (*psyché*) of the artist. (By form I mean the essence [*to ti én einai*] of each thing and its primary substance [*proten ousian*].)"[11] Production is thus characterized by the fact that the producer has *eidos* in his soul, at least preliminarily—i.e. the idea, form, or model of the thing he or she will produce—and it is with the gaze turned toward and being guided by *eidos* that the producer will bring his product into being. In other words, the producer first sets forth an image of the thing that is to be produced, or what could be termed as its essence, as a preliminary figure and model to guide the process of production, which brings forth to the *existence* the *essence* thus prefigured. It would be hard to overestimate the importance of this point for Heidegger's interpretation of the history of metaphysics: as Heidegger wrote in his course on Plato's *Sophist* in 1924–25, "it is precisely *techne* that is the ground upon which something like the *eidos* becomes visible in the first place,"[12] thus the terrain on which is grounded the interpretation of Being of the being as idea.

The second distinction implied by the producing attitude is between form and matter, given that the essence that is ideally anticipated by thought is, in itself, a form (the form of the object to be produced) and that production consists of imprinting a form onto matter (in the shaping and adapting of a given matter to impress upon it an essential form). The producing attitude is thus revealed as the ground (albeit unthought-of as such) of the fundamental categories of traditional ontology, given that all the traditional determinations of the essence of a given thing refers back to

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[10] M. Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24, pp. 147-148; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 105.

[11] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z, 7, 1031a 32–1032b 2, trans. W. D. Ross.

[12] M. Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, GA 19, p. 47; *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 33.

what is configured in configuring, formed in forming, shaped in shaping, and made in making. Shaping, forming, making all signify a letting-come-here, letting-derive from. We can characterize all these modes of action by a basic comportment of the Dasein which we can concisely call producing. […] But to produce, to place-here, *Herstellen*, means at the same time to bring into the narrower or wider circuit of the accessible, here, to this place, to the *Da*, so that the produced being stands for itself on its own account and remains able to be found there and to lie-before there [*vorliegen*] as something established stably for itself. This is the source of the Greek term *hupokeimenon*, that which lies-before.[13]

With respect to the different role that the Greek *poiesis* appears to play in the lecture on technology, one could be led to think that this could represent an evolution in Heidegger's position, one that would fall within the more general frame of the passage from the first to the second phase of Heideggerian thought.[14] However, the texts themselves resist such a presumption. In the present context, we will confine ourselves to three references, presented in chronological order, which will allow us to confirm the constancy of the critique we have attributed to Heidegger, and add certain elements to his general analysis of production.

(1) From the 1930s, attention to this question has focused in Heidegger on the conceptual pair of matter and form, as a metaphysical distinction that prevents one from grasping things in their original state, something which Heidegger defines as the "thingness" (*Dingheit*) of things. It is what he clearly affirms in "The Origin of the Work of Art" in 1936, in the course of an analysis of the traditional conceptions of the thing, ones that are rejected by Heidegger as derivative and incapable of truly thinking the thing. The third and most important of these conceptions is the one that conceives the thing precisely as the union of form and matter, as formed matter, of which Heidegger writes:

Both the design and the choice of material predetermined by that design - and, therefore, the dominance of the matter-form structure - are grounded in such serviceability. A being that falls under serviceability is always the product of a process of making. It is made as a piece of equipment for something.[15]

[…]

The matter-form structure, however, by which the being of a piece of equipment is first determined, readily presents itself as the immediately comprehensible constitution of every

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[13] GA 24, p. 152; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 108.

[14] J. Taminiaux, *Lectures de l'ontologie fondamentale. Essais sur Heidegger* (Grenoble: Millon, 1989), 171, speaks of an "ontological rehabilitation" of *poiesis* in the second phase of Heideggerian thought, which allows one to pose, among other things, the question of the thing, but the texts under examination here seem to us to refute such a formulation. In truth, it would be more accurate to speak of a reevaluation of the scope of problems to which *poiesis* applies, that is, the scope of the problems that metaphysics sought to understand as *poiesis* (the relation to a being, the question of the thing, the fields of art and technology)—a reevaluation still accompanied by a critique of the metaphysical privileging of "production" and the producing or positing attitude. This book was published in English as *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York, 1991).

[15] M. Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, in *Holzwege*, GA 5, p. 13; "The Origin of the Work of Art (1935–1936)," pp. 1-56 in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), quote on 10.

being because, here, productive humanity is itself involved in the way in which a piece of equipment comes into being.[16]

(2) The incapacity of production to capture the thingness of things will be reaffirmed several years later in 1949–1950, at the beginning of the lecture "The Thing." This was done through the famous example of the jug: to think things on the basis of production means to continue to think of them as self-supporting objects that owe their self-support to human production. "But that which in the jug's nature is its own is never brought about by its making," and to consider the jug in its "aspect" or "outward appearance"[17] means to view it "solely in the respect in which the vessel stands over against the maker as something to be made." Tellingly, Heidegger adds: "That is why Plato, who conceives of the presence of what is present in terms of the outward appearance (*Aussehen*), had no more understanding of the nature of the thing than did Aristotle and all subsequent thinkers. Rather, Plato experienced (decisively, indeed, for the sequel) everything present as an object of making."[18]

(3) In the "summary" of the seminar on *Time and Being* (1962), Heidegger's gaze extends toward the whole of the history of metaphysics and to the role that the *poiesis* and its transformations have played in it:

> The presencing of what is present […] is interpreted by Aristotle as *poiesis*. Later interpreted as *creatio*, this leads in a straight line of admirable simplicity up to positing, as the transcendental consciousness of objects. Thus it becomes evident that the fundamental characteristic of the letting-presence of metaphysics is production in its various forms.[19]

Throughout Heidegger's oeuvre, and through different ways and to different ends, the critique of the traditional ontology and metaphysics is thus a critique of their producing attitude, through the Greek concepts of *poiesis* and *techne* and their consequences regarding the history of the understanding of Being. This producing attitude consists of the consideration of beings according to their idea, that is, according to their manifest aspect, and correlatively in subordinating them to the gaze of the human producer who has to take aim at this idea in order to lead it to its realization. This operation is simultaneously the act of impressing form upon matter, and the consideration of things as the union of these two aspects. It is in light of these essential connections between the different concepts that Heidegger, in *Besinnung*, asks (rhetorically) what could be clearer than the "inner connection between *eidos-morphê-hyle* and *techne* in the Aristotelian 'metaphysics' that sets the norms not

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[16] *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, GA 5, p. 14; "The Origin of the Work of Art," ibid.

[17] We recall that "aspect," *Aussehen*, is the Heideggerian translation of *eidos*.

[18] M. Heidegger, *Das Ding*, in GA7, p. 170; "The Thing," pp. 163-184 in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 166.

[19] M. Heidegger, *Protokoll zu einem Seminar über "Zeit und Sein"*, in GA 14, p. 55; *Summary of a Seminar on the Lecture "Time and Being"*, in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 45-46. On the next page of the seminar, there is indicated that "an important distinction was made between the unconcealing, which, for example, belongs to *poiesis*, and the unconcealing which Heidegger means. Whereas the first is related to *eidos*—this is what is set apart, unconcealed in *poiesis*—what Heidegger thinks with unconcealing is related to the totality of beings" (GA 14, p. 56; *On Time and Being*, 47).

just for the Middle Ages, but for the entire Occident," and "where else can the almost unignorable distinction between «form» and «content» be rooted than in the «technical» interpretation of *on* and *ousia* that is in line with *techne*?".[20] Naturally, ancient *techne*, as Heidegger often repeats, is not contemporary technology. Yet, according to a frequent gesture within Heidegger's interpretation of the history of metaphysics, it is also crucial to mark at the same time an essential difference between the Greek world with respect to the modern one and a peculiar base continuity: *poiesis* and ancient *techne* are not contemporary technology, but they constitute the *historical precondition* for its advent. It is precisely because there has been an interpretation of the Being of beings according to *techne,* that there can be, in the destining of the Being, an interpretation of the being as a technical object, that is a giveness of the Being as *Gestell*. The gaze that considers a thing exclusively according to its definite, definable, visible aspect in order to lead this essence to existence by impressing form on matter, constitutes the first technical act, the first technological interpretation of the beings, and the root of any further technology.

The determining force of these concepts extends over all of Western thought up to its completion. In a famous passage from the first volume of *Das Kapital*, having to determine what characterizes human work relative to animal "work," Marx writes: "what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labor process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally."[21] Furthermore, there is clearly no need to insist upon the importance of the concept of production in Marx and on its essential relation to work. Indeed, Marx analyzes the process of work as one which involves the productive activity of the human subject, the instruments it uses and the objects on which they are used, namely natural matter: this process leads to the product of work, which is, he writes, "a piece of natural material adapted to human needs by means of a change in its form […] What on the side of the worker appeared in the form of unrest [*Unruhe*] now appears, on the side of the product, in the form of being [*Sein*], as a fixed, immobile characteristic."[22] It is hardly surprising, then, that in his "Letter on 'Humanism'" Heidegger should affirm that the essence of Marxist materialism does not reside in the affirmation that "everything is matter," but rather "in a metaphysical determination according to which every being appears as the material of labor," in which work is conceived, following Hegel, as "the self-establishing process of unconditioned production, which is the objectification of the actual through the human being, experienced as subjectivity." Hence, this would lead to the conclusion that "the essence of materialism is concealed in the essence of technology."[23] Heidegger will confirm this

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[20] M. Heidegger, *Besinnung*, GA 66, p. 177; *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 148.

[21] Marx, *Capital, Vol. I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 284.

[22] Marx, *Capital, Vol. I*, 287.

[23] M. Heidegger, "Brief über den «Humanismus»", in *Wegmarken*, GA 9, p. 340; "Letter on 'Humanism',*"* trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, pp. 239–276 in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill

position years later, in his 1969 seminar at Le Thor, formulating the connection between the Marxist concept of production and metaphysics in the most general sense: "For Marx, being is the production process. This is the representation that he receives from metaphysics, on the basis of Hegel's interpretation of life as process. The practical concept of production can only exist on the basis of a conception of being stemming from metaphysics."[24]

What Heidegger enables us to see as a leading thread in the history of metaphysics is a very specific concept of action and, in particular, productive and "creative" activity: the production as the activity of a demiurgic subject that objectifies himself in reality, as an activity that moves from an idealized pre-vision of things to the act of their realization, thus impressing the form of this pre-vision upon matter. The limits of this concept of action are revealed in our epoch, particularly in the light of the phenomenon of technology because, as Heidegger never stops reminding us, technology is not merely an instrument for human action, but rather a staging for the dispossession and radical expropriation of the human itself. Furthermore, from a more concrete and descriptive point of view than the one Heidegger adopts, one could also ask whether such a concept can give an account of, on the one hand, the history of technology and of how technical invention takes place, and on the other hand, of the contemporary technological acting: this takes place in a planetary, often immaterial technical web of artifacts that are already in act and are already, in some sense, acting, even before any particular subjective production.[25]

3   The Ambiguity of Poiesis and Art as Middle Term

The destruction of metaphysics is thus also the destruction of the concept of production and its primacy. How would one explain, then, this "positive" re-appropriation at the start of the lecture on technology, in which the *poiesis* is valorized as a disclosure that leads to presence and as an opposing element to the "provocation" of contemporary technology? On the one hand, it is possible to find once more here a

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 259.

[24] M. Heidegger, *Seminare*, GA 15, p. 353; *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 52.

[25] It should be said that what ought to be emphasized here is not just the content of these analyses but their form too. i.e. their way of proceeding, especially in the texts of the early 1920s: beyond what Heidegger affirms with respect to the metaphysical understanding of production, what is interesting in these analyses also resides in the fact that Heidegger roots the emergence of philosophical conceptuality in a determinate relation to the world and, more precisely, in a relation that is practical in nature. The task that comes into view from these analyses, then, is that of elaborating a genealogy of our categories, more specifically of metaphysics and technology, starting from various modalities of our action. We have examined this elsewhere, seeking to show at once the potentialities of this project as well as the fact that it is not truly realized in Heidegger's work. See R. Terzi, *Evento e genesi. Heidegger e il problema di una cosmologia fenomenologica* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis, 2016), esp. 344-63.

type of historical interpretation, one that we have already drawn attention to, and which has to emphasize the radical novelty of contemporary technology as distinguished from Greek *poiesis* while simultaneously resuscitating this as the historical precondition of the technology itself: "The revealing that challenges has its origin as a destining in bringing-forth. But at the same time enframing, in a way characteristic of a destining, blocks *poiesis*."[26]

On the other hand, one must also emphasize the specific way in which *poiesis* is enacted in "The Question Concerning Technology": Heidegger, in this occasion, does not refer to the role of *eidos* or to the matter/form couplet, but rather defines *poiesis* in its pure character of unveiling, as producing beings into presence in a process that takes place first and foremost in the same *physis* as self-disclosure. What would be in play here is thus the "strategy" of reading that Heidegger enunciates elsewhere: "to think what the Greeks have thought in an even more Greek manner," such that what is seen "is no longer, is never again Greek."[27] This would have to do with the thinking of *poiesis* in its most originary essence, presupposed by all of Greek thought, but that Greek thought had not explicitly conceived as such: an archi-originary concept of *poiesis* that would also be a concept-to-be, from the moment that it has never been properly thought and elaborated as such.

Yet, it is precisely this peculiar hermeneutical approach toward the Greeks that reveals an ambiguity which is constitutive of the Heideggerian gesture. This is how Derrida described the risk of this strategy, which consists of activating the deconstruction of metaphysics "without changing terrain, by repeating what is implicit in the founding concepts and the original problematic": by doing so, "[…] one risks ceaselessly confirming, consolidating, *relifting* (*relever*), at an always more certain depth, that which one allegedly deconstructs. The continuous process of making explicit, moving toward an opening, risks sinking into the autism of the closure."[28] In other words, as Massimo Cacciari has observed,[29] a "layer" of Heidegger's text seems to seek "salvation" from technology within a "classical" poetic model, one that was conceived of being beyond Platonic-Aristotelian conceptuality, but still founded on an inscription within an originary *physis* and a privileging of the "work": privileging the dimension of a de-finite work (*opus*) that "makes sense" and, more generally, the dimension of "operativeness" in human action, to the detriment of what remains irremediably "inoperative."[30] Now, on the one hand, Heidegger affirms that "what saves" has to paradoxically grow from within technology itself, within

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[26] GA 7, p. 31; "The Question Concerning Technology," 335.

[27] M. Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, GA 12, p. 127; *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 39.

[28] J. Derrida, "The Ends of Man," pp. 109-136 in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), quote on 135.

[29] See M. Cacciari, "Salvezza che cade. Saggio sulla questione della tecnica in Heidegger," in Cacciari-Donà, *Arte, tragedia, tecnica* (Milan: Cortina, 2000), 12-16.

[30] On the issue of the "inoperative" see J.-L. Nancy, *The inoperative community*, trans. P. Connor, L. Garbus, M. Holland, S. Sawhney (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991). On the privileging of the work by Heidegger, see also F. Leoni, "La mobilitazione

the same extreme danger of *Gestell* and not elsewhere—not even in a "return" to a model of action and of production rooted in a more originary consonance with *physis*. On the other hand, *volens nolens*, from technology, from its "things", and from the relation to things that it has imposed on us, one cannot go backward, because the passage through the world of *Gestell* is irreversible.

This same ambiguity can be observed in the reference to art that Heidegger makes at the end of the lecture. After having introduced the question of what can save us from the dominion of planetary technology through the citation of Hölderlin's famous verses "But where danger is/also grows the saving power," Heidegger asks: "But might there not perhaps be a more primally granted revealing (*ein anfänglicher gewährtes Entbergen*) that could bring the saving power into its first shining-forth in the midst of the danger […]?" To which he adds: "There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name *techne*. […] There was a time when the bringing-forth of the true in the beautiful was called *techne*. The *poiesis* of the fine arts was also called *techne*. At the outset of the destining of the West, in Greece, the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted them."[31] Even in this case, Heidegger's gesture lends itself, ambiguously, to at least a double reading. On the one hand, putting things rapidly and schematically, the risk of a similar gesture is that it involves a resolving of itself in a "Romantic" juxtaposition of art and technology, which seeks a road to salvation or escape from the latter within the former, thus referring to the apex reached by Greek art and poetry as the essence of art. A temptation which is "Romantic" and no doubt problematic, and one that would refer to that work *par excellence*, finite, and endowed with sense, which is the work of art, and to the project of sense that in other contemporaneous texts Heidegger calls "poetically dwelling" the world.[32] Indeed, a similar temptation would be problematic also because it seems to rest on an oscillation between the initial (*anfänglich*) and the originary that is not absent from other Heidegger texts. When he asks himself, in the passage that was previously mentioned, whether there is "a more primally granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining-forth," referring directly after to the apex reached by Greek art, we can ask if this affirmation can truly justify itself: for what reason should an initial or primal unveiling at the Greek origins of thought hold a more originary value than other unveilings, given that all are at the same time unveilings and occultations of the event of Being?

On the other hand, the passage in question also lends itself to another, more fecund interpretation: the reference to art in this case can have the function of a

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dell'essere. Una lettura di Heidegger e Jünger," published as appendix to C. Sini, *Del viver bene. Filosofia ed economia* (Milan: CUEM 2005), 201.

[31] GA 7, p. 35; "The Question Concerning Technology," 339. On the relation between art and technology in Heidegger, from "The Origin of the Work of Art" on, see D. Aurenque, "Die Kunst und die Technik. Herstellung, *poiesis*, *techne*," pp. 33-45 in D. Espinet and T. Keiling, eds., *Heideggers Ursprung des Kunstwerks. Ein kooperativer Kommentar* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2011).

[32] See M. Heidegger, "*…dichterisch wohnet der Mensch…*", in GA 7, pp. 189-208 ; "…Poetically Man Dwells…" (*Poetry, Language, Thought*, 209-227). In an analogous direction, see also the observations in M. Cacciari, "Salvezza che cade," 46-50.

"middle term" that would allow one to distance oneself from technology to approach a broader, more common realm, one indicated by, for example, the Greek term *techne*, of which Heidegger recalls that it included both technical-artisanal work and fine arts. The return to art would then have the aim of allowing one to raise the question of another sense of "production" or a different relationship to production. This is seen not only in the broader sense of *techne*, but also in one of the last affirmations of the lecture, which makes explicit the "methodical" sense of the passage through art: "Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology, and, on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such a realm is art."[33] This is why Heidegger writes, in certain notes on technology, that "the essence of technology indicates the same realm in which art and its destiny occur,"[34] and that in the formulation "art and technology" "the 'and' belongs to what is worth investigating."[35] Art, then, is not so much a way forward, and eventually a way out, as opposed to technology, but an example (and an "exemplary" example) of another form of production and a different relation to things, one that is conceived analogously to art or starting from what art reveals about human making.

It is in this direction that the most fertile aspect of Heidegger's analyses comes to the fore. What these invite us to think about, together with the destruction/deconstruction of the metaphysical concept of production, is a post-metaphysical conception of acting and producing: the (admittedly paradoxical) idea of a "non-subjective" action, beyond the demiurgic, productive metaphysical subject, of his ideas, form, and matter, of his power and act.

4   A Non-subjective and Cosmological Production

Naturally, this paper will not look to confront the *pars construens* of this problem, that is, the elements that could be drawn from certain Heideggerian analysis with respect to another conception of "production" and of another relationship to things—elements that can be found especially in "The Origin of the Work of Art," in certain passages of the *Beiträge*, in the texts on the thing and those on the *Geviert*, the fourfold. Rather, we will limit ourselves to certain indications in two directions: the transformation of the sense itself of human action and production imposed by contemporary technicity, and the extent to which we can conceive of a new sense of production starting from an analogic comparison to art.

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[33] GA 7, p. 36; "The Question Concerning Technology," 340.

[34] M. Heidegger, *Leitgedanken zur Entstehung der Metaphysik, der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft, und der modernen Technik*, GA 76, 330. Translation ours.

[35] Ibid., 377. Translation ours.

(1) The epochal limits of the metaphysical concept of production, and what has been derived from it, invite us to think of human action differently. This would mean to conceive of production and our correlative relation to things in a non-metaphysical way. "Non-metaphysically" no doubt also means "non-technically," given that technology for Heidegger is the final fulfillment of metaphysics and that its unthought dominion obscures our relationship to things. "Non-technically" and yet, at the same time, *starting from technology*, thereby deepening and radicalizing what technology reveals by eventually overturning its sense. In fact, one ought not forget that while Heidegger developed a radical critique of the dominion of technology, he also indicated its decisive and epochal role several times, and as such, its intimate connection to the turn and to the event: not only with respect to Hölderlin's famous verses,[36] but also, and with a particular focus, on the passages in which Heidegger writes that the *Gestell*, the essence of technology, is the "prelude" to *Ereignis*,[37] a "Janus head"[38] between the history of metaphysics and *Ereignis* or, in perhaps the most efficacious image, that the *Gestell* is the "photographic negative" of *Ereignis*.[39] It is the essence of technology that exhibits, in perhaps the most radical, albeit "negative" way, the reciprocal appropriation of Being and man: the Being needs man and its action in order to reveal itself, just as man is, in turn, transpropriated to and used by the Being in a process of unveiling that is not decided by the man itself. In the age of technology, Man is completely "outside of himself," subordinated to the imperative of the technological exploitation of reality, and finds himself reduced to a reserve, to be no more than an utilizable resource. Yet, in this way, technology relieves man from any pretense of occupying a central position in Being and of having a substantial consistency; thus, it can become an occasion to recognize that man does not have an essence, but is entirely consigned to the opening of Being:

> As this destining, the essential unfolding of technology gives man entry into something which, of himself, he can neither invent nor in any way make. For there is no such thing as a man who exists singly and solely on his own.[40]
> […]
> It is precisely in enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the ostensibly sole way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light.[41]

More than any other phenomenon, technology reveals the vain nature of the subjectivist, demiurgic, or humanistic images of man: it reveals, in other words, that in our doing and acting, we are not the master of what we do and are not the subjects of

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[36] Heidegger cites Hölderlin's verses at the end of the lecture on technology.

[37] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*, in *Identität und Differenz*, GA 11, p. 45-46; *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 36.

[38] M. Heidegger, *Protokoll zu einem Seminar über "Zeit und Sein"*, in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, GA 14, p. 63; *On Time and Being*, 53.

[39] M. Heidegger, *Seminar in Le Thor* 1969, in *Seminare*, GA 15, p. 366; *Four Seminars*, 60.

[40] GA 7, p. 32-33; "The Question Concerning Technology," 337.

[41] GA 7, p. 33; ibid.

our actions. If it is a matter of thinking of a non-subjectivist concept of production, one can start to glimpse the sense in which *Gestell* could be the "photographic negative" of another beginning.

However, contemporary technology also constitutes an irreversible transformation in another sense. A new thought of production should also consider the peculiar characteristics that radically separates contemporary technology from earlier forms of production and technology, and which Heidegger himself helped to bring to light. These characteristics escape, in fact, the descriptive capacity of the classical concept of *poiesis*: while *poiesis* is the activity that is oriented toward the realization of a finite and delimited object, which constitutes its scope and result, contemporary technology appears to be guided by an aimless infinity, in which every product is immediately consigned to consumption, to destruction, and to its own overcoming in an infinite process, in an aimless infinity in which one produces just to produce. All this also means that the infinite process of planetary technology seems to subtract itself from the Aristotelian distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, given that neither it has its own aim in the realization of an external finite object (as in *poiesis*), nor it is an ethical activity that has in itself and in its every instantiation accomplished its own end (as in *praxis*).[42] All this further implies that, as shown by Heidegger[43], in contemporary technology the consistency of the object in its modern form is decreased; thus we no longer have to deal with objects, but with "standing-reserves" (*Bestand*) of energy and, one could say, with nodes of relation.

(2) The form of production proper to art is characterized by the bringing-to-light of a being, the work of art, that, in turn, sheds its own light on the opening in which this being inserts itself: "The bringing forth places this being in the open in such a way that what is to be brought forth first clears the openness of the open into which it comes forth. When this bringing forth brings with it specifically the openness of beings, that is, truth, that which is brought forth, is a work. Bringing forth of this kind is creation."[44] In other words, the work of art is a singular, maximally singular entity, which simultaneously institutes a world and a historical opening of truth, in which *it* is also inserted as a singular thing, though this opening does not pre-exist the production of the work of art. The work of art is not merely the product of a subjective action and its intention, nor is it the simple realization of a preliminary idea. Rather, it corresponds to the event and in this way it is the institution of a world. In this institution, the work of art, as Heidegger states, exhibits and maintains its own "rift," that is the pure "'that it is'" of createdness[45]: it is a product that exposes itself in its pure facticity and contingency and reveals, in this way, the facticity, contingency, and pure event of any product.

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[42] See F. Leoni, *La mobilitazione dell'essere*, 204-205.

[43] GA 7, p. 17; "The Question Concerning Technology", 322.

[44] GA 5, p. 50; "The Origin of the Work of Art," 37.

[45] GA 5, p. 53; ibid., 40.

   Heidegger specifies that, in this institutional event, the work of art is simultane-
ously the *Aufstellung* of a world and the "setting forth" (*Herstellen*) of the earth.[46]
In this context, Heidegger uses this term in a particular way, but one should not
forget that it still related to the verb that means "to produce" in German. One could
thus say that the production of the work of art is the coming-to-be of a world and the
paradoxical "production" of the earth— paradoxical, because the earth is precisely
what withdraws, as it is unproduceable and inexhaustible, meaning that every pro-
duction also makes appear, along with itself, its own unproduceable ground, and
thus exhibits its own finitude.

   If one keeps in mind that Heidegger also affirms that the setting-forth of truth
peculiar to art is *a* modality, albeit a privileged one, of a more general ontological
relation, which would be the self-disclosing of Being *in* a being,[47] or the event of the
world in a thing, one can also say that the various corresponding modalities in
human action are thus many modalities of appearance of Being in a being, of the
production of a thing that is at the same time a world-thing. Indeed, it is in this direc-
tion of a "cosmological" production, the production of a world-thing, that Heidegger
will orient himself toward. These can be seen in examples such as the texts on the
fourfold (*Geviert*), and especially in "Building Dwelling Thinking." In the last
pages of the text, in seeking to determine the sense of building and, in particular,
those modalities of building that are the "raising up" (*Errichten*)[48] of things that are
not "in nature," Heidegger asks himself, "what that process of making consists in by
which building is accomplished."[49] Heidegger affirms that one cannot adequately
understand production if one understands it simply as "an activity whose perfor-
mance has a result, the finished structure, as its consequence,"[50] or if one defines it
starting from its practical and technical manifestations, such as architecture or engi-
neering. However—and this is an aspect worth underlining—"the erecting of build-
ings would not be suitably defined *even* if we were to think of it in the sense of the
original Greek *techne* as *solely* a letting-appear, which brings something made, as
something present, among the things that are already present."[51] By breaking in this
way the "disclosing" paradigm that had guided a great deal of his reflections,
Heidegger can affirm that the essence of production is "a producing (*Her-bringen*)

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[46] GA 5, p. 30 sq.; ibid., 24 sq.

[47] M. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, GA 65, p. 71; *Contributions to Philosophy (to the Event)*, trans. Richard Rocjewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 57. In this text, Heidegger uses the term *Bergung* to name this relation of "sheltering" of Being in beings. One can observe here that, among the various modalities of *Bergung*, in at least one passage Heidegger also cites *Machenschaft*, a term that in the *Beiträge* indicates the essence of technology: GA 65, p. 70; *Contributions to Philosophy*, 56.

[48] At the beginning of the lecture, Heidegger distinguishes between building as *Pflegen*, cultivating things that are in nature, and *Errichten*, raising up things produced by man. See M. Heidegger, *Bauen wohnen denken*, in GA 7, p. 149; "Building Dwelling Thinking," trans. Albert Hofstadter, pp. 343–364 in *Basic Writings*, quote on 349.

[49] GA 7, p. 161; "Building Dwelling Thinking", 349.

[50] Ibid.

[51] GA 7, p. 162; ibid.

that brings something forth (*vorbringt*). For building brings the fourfold *hither* into a thing, the bridge, and brings *forth* the thing as a locale, out into what is already present, room for which is only now made *by* this locale (*eingeräumt*)."[52]

It is thus this subject-less production, without pre-vision, without form and matter, an event-based production of a world-thing that happens to the subject beyond its own power and against the backdrop of what remains unproduceable, which remains to be thought.

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Heidegger and the Conception of Technology as Fate

Carmine Di Martino

Abstract Heidegger understands technology as a mode of revealing, i.e., a way of discovering and comprehending reality, which is not merely the result of human invention and operation, but rather a destiny which surpasses and addresses the human being, insofar as its root lay deep in the very advent of philosophy, of the West and its position toward being as a whole. How can we still have interest in such ontological conception of technology as a destiny? What is its topical relevance for the present? What is its contribution to thinking the transformative action of technology, i.e., the opportunity and threat it brings with it?

Keywords Heidegger · Technology · Production · Challenge · Standing reserve · Anthropogenesis · Feedback

Why revisit once more Heidegger's reflections on technology, which are widely known and discussed? The reason is twofold. On the one hand, Heidegger's critique of the anthropological-instrumental conception of technology represents to this day one of the most significant contributions on this topic in the whole philosophical landscape. On the other, using Heidegger's critique as a foil we can let another way of conceiving of technology come to light. The different understanding of technology I want to propose moves, like Heidegger's, toward a deconstruction of an anthropocentric view, but it follows a path and a motivation that are somehow reversed compared to Heidegger. This new understanding of technology is what I intend to outline in the present chapter.

C. Di Martino (✉)
Dipartimento di Filosofia "Piero Martinetti", Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy
e-mail: carmine.dimartino@unimi.it

1   Heidegger's Indebtedness to Jünger

The theme of technology is not extemporaneous or marginal in Heidegger's thinking. Rather, it cuts across his entire production after the publication of *Being and Time.* The most widely known results of Heidegger's reflection about technology are presented in his exoteric writings from the 1950es, where he addresses a wider, not necessarily professional audience. His most renowned writing is undoubtedly *The Question of Technology* (1953). Heidegger's reflection on technology, however, begins much earlier, from the beginning of the 1930es after his reading of Ernst Jünger's *Der Arbeiter,* which was published in 1932 right after *Total Mobilization* in 1930. With regard to technology, Heidegger is indebted to Jünger, as he explicitly recognizes. Volume 90 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*, which carries the title *Zu Ernst Jünger*, offers broad documentation of this indebtedness, including the impressive amount of notes and schemes Heidegger wrote about *Der Arbeiter* during a time ranging from 1934 to 1954. Heidegger constructs his interpretation of technology through a double-headed reading of *Der Arbeiter*, as it were, thereby both accepting and criticizing Jünger's views.[1]

Heidegger learns from Jünger how to conceive of technology as a metaphysical issue, rather than a merely anthropological or sociological problem. In Heidegger's framework technology as thematized by Jünger becomes the definitive trait of metaphysics and the West, i.e., of Western nihilistic destiny. Jünger writes: "Technology is the manner in which the form of the worker mobilizes the world".[2] It is a "total mobilization", which nothing can escape: the whole of being is mobilized, i.e., put to work and subjected to technological doing and the domination of its forms: "we sense that here, not a single atom is not in motion – that we are profoundly inscribed in this raging process".[3] From this point of view, the Worker represents the anonymous and impersonal executor, i.e., it is almost a metaphysical principle, rather than a determinate and singular protagonist of the imposition of technological forms to the totality of reality. The Worker lends, as it were, its work to a technologization of the existent, "which occurs by itself".[4] According to the Jünger-inspired Heidegger, total mobilization presents itself under the banner of domination and desertification, i.e., as an all-encompassing process of the subjection of all that exists, including the human being, to *technological feasibility* (i.e., realizability, transformability, modifiability).[5]

However, whereas for Jünger technology as the form of total mobilization stands titanically over against the values of Western and Christian metaphysics, thereby determining the nihilistic turn of the West, for Heidegger technology is, by contrast, metaphysics itself in its completion, i.e., the destiny of the attitude towards being

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[1] See Gorgone (2011) about Heidegger's indebtedness to Jünger.

[2] Jünger (1981: 105).

[3] Jünger (1998: 128).

[4] Jünger (1998: 128).

[5] For a more thorough reflection on this topic in Heidegger and Jünger cf. Resta (2013).

that becomes dominant through philosophy, more specifically through Plato, which Heidegger calls 'metaphysics'. Thus, nihilism belongs to the very roots of the West and does not befall it from the outside as a contradiction or a deviation. In Heidegger's eyes, the age of technology is nothing but the definitive realization of metaphysics and the Worker is not a novel human type, but rather the incarnation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* which brings modern subjectivity to fulfillment in the form of "will to will" or "will to power". According to Heidegger, Jünger does not see that current technology is the final result of technological interpretation of the world called philosophy or metaphysics, nor does he see that the Worker represents the culmination of modern subjectivity. Indeed, to achieve this perspective, Jünger should have interpreted the phenomenon of technology in light of Heidegger's own question of Being.

Heidegger develops his notion of *Machenschaft* (which is usually translated as "machination") taking his cue precisely from Jünger's *Totale Mobilmachung*. This notion defines the entire first phase of Heidegger's reflection on technology, which is developed in texts that were unpublished for a long time, only to then be abandoned after the war and replaced with the more widely known notion of *Ge-stell*, which is translated as "Enframing" and comes onto the scene in texts from the 1950es. *Machenschaft* refers to the verb *machen* (make) and to the interpretation of being starting from its exposure to cognition, production, effectuation, and human doing. This interpretation of being imposes itself, according to Heidegger, at the dawn of philosophy, announcing itself in the word *techne*. By *techne* the Greeks would not have meant primarily the enframing of beings through the use of machines, but rather the manner of cognizing and understanding being which aims at its 'pro-duction', i.e., at its stabilization in the presence, geared toward keeping and assuring being in presence's horizon, thereby anticipating the other mode of viewing beings represented by calculating and manipulating cognition of modern technology and science.

Already at the beginning of philosophy being starts to be interpreted from the perspective of its producibility (first of all in the sense of *poiesis*), i.e., its feasibility (*Machbarkeit*). This would connect with the Aristotelian distinction between natural beings and artifacts, which, unlike natural beings, do not harbor within themselves the cause of their realizations. Rather, that cause resides in something else, i.e., the *techne* which is available to the *architekton*.

In Heidegger's conception, *Techne* and *Machenschaft* represent, with increasing clarity, the two poles of one and the same trajectory: the beginning and end of the same interpretive path, along which being is conceived as simple presence available to our grasp. Feasibility (*Machbarkeit*), i.e., exposure to cognizing-producing-operating imposes itself as the mode of being of beings from the very inception of philosophy. In the winter semester course of 1937/38 Heidegger writes: "Contemporary technology – as a form of 'total mobilization' (Ernst Jünger) – can only be understood on the basis of the beginning of the basic Western position toward beings as such and as a whole, assuming that we are striving for a 'meta-

physical' understanding and are not satisfied with integrating technology into the goals of politics".[6]

2   An Announced Apocalypse

"No one can foresee the radical changes to come. But technological advance will move faster and faster and can never be stopped".[7] When Heidegger wrote these words in 1955 he could certainly not imagine the extent of the revolutionary progress and the measure of velocity of the unstoppable developments that he lucidly predicted. His most alarming projections wither before the results our technology has reached; however, already back then Heidegger realized the extent to which human life, in each of its spheres, was increasingly sieged by "the forces of technology"[8] and the extent to which they influenced their users. Heidegger's writings from the 1950es repeatedly recall the fields of atomic weaponry and genetic engineering. The former because of its possibility to annihilate humanity and devastate the Earth, and the latter because of the evident perspective of manipulation of the human being which it inaugurates. The "daring of scientific research"[9] in its various aspects prefigured, according to Heidegger, "an attack […] upon the life and nature of man compared with which the explosion of the hydrogen bomb means little".[10] Based on the rapid progress of chemistry and biology, one should expect that within a few years it would be possible to "build factories for the artificial breeding of human material".[11] With an apocalyptical tone, Heidegger announced, thereby referring to Nobel-prize for chemistry winner Stanley, the coming of a time when living substance would be decomposed and recomposed at will by the techno-scientific manipulation. The twentieth-century human being was becoming itself an object of calculating thinking and technological doing. Consequently, it was doomed to a radical transformation. In his essay *On the Essence and Concept of Physis*, written in 1939 and published in 1958, Heidegger writes: "Sometimes it seems as if modern humanity is rushing headlong toward this goal of *producing itself technologically*. If humanity achieves this, it will have exploded itself, i.e., *its essence* qua *subjectivity*, into thin air".[12]

The results have sometimes far exceeded Heidegger's predictions. The fields of genetic engineering and bio-engineering have progressed to a hitherto unimaginable degree. But the most surprising developments came from the digital revolution. The

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[6] Heidegger (1994: 154).

[7] Heidegger (1966: 51).

[8] Heidegger (1966: 51).

[9] Heidegger (1966: 52).

[10] Heidegger (1966: 52).

[11] Heidegger (1998a: 86).

[12] Heidegger (1998b: 197).

developments of cybernetics, informatization and computerization, to which Heidegger devoted increasing attention toward the end of his life,[13] disclosed the wide-ranging field of artificial intelligence. This paradigm, in recent years, has made possible the production of androids, that is, robots endowed with artificial intelligence who are able, within certain limits, to interact with human beings and even replace efficiently some of their abilities. Parallel to this development we have witnessed unheard-of perspectives of hybridization between humans and machines, i.e., the enhancement of bio-psychical and neuro-physiological capacities through artificial prostheses, thereby opening the door to conjectures and projects in the sphere of the mind, such as so-called 'mind uploading', i.e., the transferal of conscious minds on non-biological devices.

Although he always formulates his descriptions of the technologization of the world in the negative register of alienation and loss, Heidegger's declarations never amounted to an explicit demonization of technology. In Heidegger's eyes technology does not constitute a danger *in itself*: "Yet it is not that the world is becoming entirely technical which is rather uncanny. Far more uncanny is our being unprepared for this transformation, our inability to confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age".[14]

What is uncanny, then, is our lack of preparedness to the transformation produced by technology, i.e., the absence of a "meditative thinking" that takes it upon itself to think "the essence of technology" and to dispute the dominance of "merely calculative thinking".[15] By way of failing to attend to such meditative thinking, the human being runs the risk of being overwhelmed by the super-power of technology, i.e., of being blinded by the relationship with technological devices unbeknownst of the risk it is running, which is all the more relevant, the more humans believe that they can dominate technology.

3 Techne, Poiesis, Aletheia

The conference of 1953, *The Question of Technology,* enables us to reconstruct in a few brushstrokes Heidegger's conception of technology. His initial premise is that to achieve a "free relationship" with technology it is imperative to understand its essence. But the essence of technology "is by no means anything technological". Therefore, it does not suffice to describe technological activity and its devices in order to grasp the essence of technology. Nor does it suffice to practice technology. Having a free relationship with technology does not mean accepting enthusiastically technology or, by contrast, negating it vehemently; however, we are most

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[13] Cf. Heidegger (1995: 368); Heidegger (1984).

[14] Heidegger (1966: 52).

[15] Heidegger (1966: 53).

extremely captive to technology "when we consider it something neutral". Such a picture of technology makes us completely blind toward it.

What *is*, then, technology? We know, Heidegger observes, the two answers that are customarily provided to this question: "One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity".[16] Nothing is more solidly engrained, according to Heidegger, than such a way of understanding technology. On the one hand, technology is *instrumentum*, i.e., the totality of the means and machines that serve human needs and goals. On the other, technology is the human activity of proposing such goals, i.e., of building and utilizing the means that are necessary in order to achieve them. This is, in short, the "instrumental and anthropological definition of technology",[17] which characterizes our common understanding. The greatest merit of Heidegger's reflection, which contributes to preserving it as a live option for contemporary thinking, is its radical questioning of this common understanding.

What can possibly be objected to the common understanding of technology? In one sense nothing. The common understanding is in fact correct, Heidegger argues: "It is an obvious conformity with what we are envisioning when we talk about technology".[18] The common understanding is correct to the point of holding for both artisanal technology of the past and modern technology, which is, nonetheless, viewed as "something completely novel and different". And yet, as Heidegger notes, although it is correct, the common understanding does not reveal technology in its essence. Rather, the common understanding corroborates our blindness toward technology and it increases our level of captivity to it. The anthropological-instrumental understanding of technology puts us in the same predicament of the fly that hits the inner sides of the bottle without finding a way out. The more technology is understood as a "means to a set of ends", the more obviously the problem of our relationship with technology will be reduced to the problem of our adequate use of it. We will be inclined to say: "we will 'get' technology 'spiritually in hands'",[19] which will bring with it the presumption and the will to dominate technology. Such a will is all the more feverish, the more technology proves to escape our control and threatens us.

"But suppose now that technology were no mere means, how would it stand with the will to master it?".[20] Following the thread of this question Heidegger sets out to deconstruct the anthropocentric view of technology. First of all, he proposes to look more closely to the customary understanding of technology as *instrumentum*. "Wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality".[21] Talk of instruments and goals necessarily implies a

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[16] Heidegger (1977: 4).

[17] Heidegger (1977: 5).

[18] Heidegger (1977: 5).

[19] Heidegger (1977: 5).

[20] Heidegger (1977: 5).

[21] Heidegger (1977: 6).

causal relation, through which effects are produced: something causes, provokes, procures the appearance of something else. Moving back from instrumentality to causality, Heidegger invites his readers to conceive in a more originary way the Aristotelian theory of the four causes. The significant difference between what we are used to imagine as cause and the notion of causality holding sway in Greek thinking becomes apparent. Heidegger notes that for us, at least beginning with the Latin translation of *aition* with *causa* and through the progressive reduction of the four causes to the *causa efficiens*, causing means operating, i.e. producing results or effects. For the Greeks *aition* had "nothing at all to do with bringing about and effecting", rather, it meant "that to which something else is indebted".[22] Thus, the four causes are interconnected modes of "being-indebted".

Let us consider, following Heidegger, an artifact such as a silver chalice. Among the modes of being-indebted of the chalice feature first and foremost *hyle* and *eidos,* matter and aspect: "Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel".[23] However, matter and form could not be co-responsible in their specific mode without a third factor, the *telos*, which defines the object in advance and thus configures a certain relationship between matter and form. The *telos* is thus responsible in a pre-eminent way: it is responsible of the being co-responsible of *hyle* and *eidos*. "Finally there is a fourth participant in the responsibility for the finished sacrificial vessel's lying before us ready for use, i.e., the silversmith – but not at all because he, in working, brings about the finished sacrificial chalice as if it were the effect of a making; the silversmith is not a *causa efficiens*".[24]

This is the key point. The Aristotelian doctrine of the four causes, according to Heidegger, does not include that which we indicate with the name of efficient cause, nor does Aristotle use a corresponding Greek term. How is the silversmith, then, co-responsible for the presence of the chalice? He "considers and collects" the first three modes of being-responsible in such a way that they are brought to bear in the production of the chalice. However, "To consider carefully [*überlegen*] is in Greek *legein*, *logos*. *Legein* is rooted in *apofainesthai*, to bring forward into appearance. The silversmith is co-responsible as that from whence the sacrificial vessel's bringing forth and resting-in-self take and retain their first departure".[25] The sense of this kind of *production* must now be clarified. In order to preserve it from possible misunderstandings, it is important to dwell on the meaning of the four modes of being-responsible. What are they responsible of? Of the chalice's being there before us. In other words, "they let what is not yet present arrive into presencing". Letting something arrive into presencing translates, in Greek, *poiesis*, pro-duction, "bringing-forth".

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[22] Heidegger (1977: 7).

[23] Heidegger (1977: 7).

[24] Heidegger (1977: 8).

[25] Heidegger (1977: 8).

To conceive of *poiesis* like the Greeks, to avoid identifying it immediately with artisanal construction or artistic production, one has to consider that *physis*, too, is primarily 'pro-duction', i.e., *poiesis*, and it is so in its eminent sense. "For what presences by means of *physis* have the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself (*en heautōi*)".[26] By contrast, "what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g., the silver chalice, has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth not in itself, but in another (*en allōi*), in the craftsman or artist",[27] in the *architekton*, as Aristotle says. Both natural entities and artifacts arrive to appearance through 'pro-duction', or bringing-forth. What is, then, such bringing-forth, what does it operate? "Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing (*das Entbergen*). The Greeks have the word *aletheia* for revealing".[28]

By way of asking the question on the essence of technology taking our departure from the common understanding, we surprisingly reached the truth, i.e., *aletheia*, the unconcealment or revealing. Heidegger writes: "What has the essence of technology to do with revealing? The answer: everything. For every bringing-forth is grounded in revealing".[29] Taking one's cue from technology as *instrumentum*, one runs into causality and, in the attempt to think causality in the most originary way, we found something different from what we commonly understand with causality, i.e., the bringing something to appearance that is called *poiesis* in Greek, production, which, in turn, is grounded in revealing, in *aletheia*. The movement that took its departure from technology as a means now presents us, as the point of arrival, another kind of technology, which has something to do with *poiesis* and *aletheia*. This is precisely the *non-technological essence of technology*: "technology is a mode of revealing",[30] a mode of happening of truth, i.e., of the manifestative opening in which things appear to us.

How are we to understand this famous Heideggerian formulation? In order to clarify the double connection of technology with *poiesis* and *aletheia*, Heidegger invites us to focus our attention on the derivation of the word 'technology' from the Greek *techne*. On the one hand, *techne* means both artistic and artisanal activity (*poiesis*). On the other, and more decisively, "from earliest times until Plato the word *techne* is linked to the word *episteme*". "They both are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home with something, to understand and be expert in it". We thus begin to shed light on the apparently unmotivated connection between technology and revealing: "Such knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing".[31]

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[26] Heidegger (1977: 10).

[27] Heidegger (1977: 10–11).

[28] Heidegger (1977: 11–12).

[29] Heidegger (1977: 12).

[30] Heidegger (1977: 12).

[31] Heidegger (1977: 13).

Techne, like *episteme*, is a mode of knowing entities, i.e., a mode of revealing. *Techne*'s difference from *episteme*, as Aristotle points out, pertains to the *what* and the *mode* of its revealing. What is its specificity? What is *techne* all about? "It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another".[32] *Techne* is the kind of knowledge that is knowledgeable about things that determine the success of a bringing-forth. How? Its revealing unites (*legein*) the aspect (*eidos*) and the matter (*hyle*) of the thing that has to be brought-forth, such as a chalice, in the complete vision of the *telos*, the completed thing and determines on this basis the modes of construction. We have to pay attention to the consequence: "Thus what is decisive in *techne* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing".[33]

Techne is thus a bringing-forth, it is *poiesis*, which we do not have to interpret as construction, but rather as letting something move forward into presence grounded in *aletheia*, i.e., in revealing, and which precedes the activity of constructing. What is it, then, that the *architekton* needs to possess in order to build her artifacts? It is precisely *techne* as the "know-how in, i.e., familiarity with, what grounds every act of making and producing".[34] *Architekton* is the person who has the *eidos* of the thing to be brought forth in view from the beginning. Such fore-seen aspect, *eidos pro-aireton,* is the *telos*, which is precisely, "that about which *techne* has its know-how. Only *for this reason* does *techne* also come to be defined as the kind and manner of procedure that we call 'technique'".[35] The essence of technology, thus, does not reside primarily in the movement of handling qua activity, but in the intending of *eidos*, of *telos*, and therefore of the procedure.

4   *The* Ge-Stell *as a Sending of Destiny*

"Technology is a mode of revealing". This is technology's essence according to Heidegger, an essence to which contemporary discourse remains blind. More originally than being a means to an end or an activity of constructing, *techne* is *a* mode of *aletheuein*, *the* mode of uncovering beings that grasps the *eidos,* i.e., that fore-sees or anticipates the *telos.* Technology is the knowledge from which beings are kept in un-concealment and thus can be put to work, realized and produced. Production as a mode of building is thus grounded in the 'pro-duction', which means bringing to 'un-hiddenness': in order to build the artifact it is necessary for it to be first pro-duced, i.e., revealed in its aspect (*eidos, idea*) and in its fulfillment

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[32] Heidegger (1977: 13).

[33] Heidegger (1977: 13).

[34] Heidegger (1998b: 192).

[35] Heidegger (1998b: 192).

(*telos*), which implies the foregoing opening of a manifestative horizon where the entity can be encountered in a certain way.

Techne is a mode of revealing beings, the mode of revealing which has in the *idea* its guiding criterion: it comes to fruition with Plato and it is called philosophy. With Plato, reality shows itself in the light of ideas: the understanding of beings becomes the capacity "to act with regard to the ideas, and that requires a constant assimilation to them".[36] Thus, *techne* constitutes something much more decisive and profound than our meaning of the word 'technology'. *Techne* represents for Heidegger the fundamental Western stance toward being in its totality, it identifies the definitive trait of Western culture. However, Heidegger asks, does this movement back toward *techne* and *aletheia* enable us to grasp also the meaning of modern technology, which is "machine-powered",[37] i.e., the kind of technology that causes our worries and leads us to question anxiously its effects? The answer is positive: what we argued about ancient technology holds in the same way for modern technology, and it is even the necessary condition to probe the depths of that which governs the "age of machines" (Jünger) and the technologization of being. "What is modern technology? It too is a revealing",[38] i.e., a mode of knowing beings, a kind of stance and procedure toward beings. Only from this perspective what is novel about modern technology becomes clear. The mode of revealing which characterizes modern technology, however, "does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis*",[39] but rather, "it sets upon it in the sense of challenging it", i.e., as a stance "which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such".[40] In the mode of revealing which characterizes modern technology, nature encounters us as extractible, transformable, storable and employable energy. In the mode of revealing and understanding beings which governs modern technology, reality no longer stands before us as an 'object', but rather reveals itself as 'standing-reserve' (*Bestand*): the earth appears to us *as* a coal mine, the soil *as* a reserve of minerals, the air *as* a repository of azote, the river *as* hydric power, etc.

Heidegger calls that, which engages humans to reveal reality as standing-reserve, as we anticipated, *Ge-stell*. This mode of revealing is the definitive trait of our age: everything appears in the perspective of employability (Günther Anders translates this idea, in line with Heidegger, with an imperative: "Not only do we have a duty to exploit whatever is exploitable. We also have a duty to try and discover the 'exploitability' that is supposed to be inherent in everything, including the human being"[41]).

However, we should not intend this mode of revealing as something 'subjective', as if it were some individual's choice that subsequently transmitted itself to other

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[36] Heidegger (1994: 156).

[37] Heidegger (1977: 13).

[38] Heidegger (1977: 14).

[39] Heidegger (1977: 14).

[40] Heidegger (1977: 14–15).

[41] Anders 1980: 32. My translation.

individuals through fascination or coercion and could be revoked at any time. What is at play here is not a set of attitudes or individual stances. "Who accomplishes the challenging setting-upon through which what we call the real is revealed as standing-reserve?".[42] If the question means who realizes the 'challenging setting-upon' at stake, the answer is obvious: the human being. But if we ask who established this mode of revealing, the answer changes: "But man does not have control over unconcealment itself, in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws".[43] This doesn't hold solely for the challenging mode of revealing, but also for what we stated above: "The fact that the real has been showing itself in the light of Ideas ever since the time of Plato, Plato did not bring about. The thinker only responded to what addressed itself to him".[44] The changes in the horizons of manifestation in which reality shows itself to us in this or that way, i.e., as "essence" or *idea*, as "object", as "standing-reserve" are not human work, even though they require humans in order to realize themselves. At this juncture, a non-human, superior, and invisible power comes into play, i.e., a power that governs the delineation and transformation of cultures, the coming-and-going horizons of meaning. When humans realize the 'challenging setting-upon', for instance, by way of extracting oil from the underground, it is because a space of manifestation opened up already independently of any human decision or power, i.e., a space of manifestation where nature can show up as 'challengeable'. Similarly, when humans begin to relate to beings as objects of their representation, the space in which reality can be encountered in such a way must be already open. In the same sense, in which it wasn't Plato who made possible the showing of reality in light of the ideas, it wasn't Descartes who made possible the manifestation of reality as *objectum*, i.e., as the correlate of a representational activity, neither was it Nietzsche who determined the revealing of nature, i.e. of being in its totality, as a standing-reserve available to technology's will to power.

But if unconcealment is not a human work, where does it come from? On the one hand, the revealing does not happen somewhere else, outside human activity. On the other, however, "neither does it happen exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man".[45] This is the point where Heidegger's interpretive paradigm becomes explicit and comes to its completion: "Enframing (*das Gestell*) is an ordaining (*Schickung*) of destining (*Geschick*), as is every way of revealing".[46] Therefore, the "producing that lets things appear" and the "challenging employment" are both modes of revealing and as such they both depend on a fateful ordaining.

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[42] Heidegger (1977: 18).

[43] Heidegger (1977: 18).

[44] Heidegger (1977: 18).

[45] Heidegger (1977: 24).

[46] Heidegger (1977: 24–25).

5   The Human Being: Technology's Plaything

By way of presenting technology as a mode of revealing which does not depend primarily on the human being, Heidegger's reflection invites us not to stand naively before technology, as if it were merely an offshoot of human work, of which human beings ultimately remain creators and arbiters. "Thus Enframing [*das Ge-stell*] is in no way the product of human machination. It is, on the contrary, the most extreme form of the history of metaphysics, that is, of the destiny of Being".[47] This implies that humans cannot steer technology as they wish with some sovereign act, be it individual or communal: "No single man, no group of men, no commission of prominent statesmen, scientists, and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry, can brake or direct the progress of history in the atomic age. No *merely human* organization is capable of gaining dominion over it".[48]

Heidegger's interpretive paradigm thus proposes a drastic reversal compared to common thinking: "Man does not hold technology in his hand. He is its plaything. In this situation, there reigns a complete forgetfulness of Being, a complete concealment of Being".[49]

In order not to remain trapped in the problem of technology like flies in the bottle it is necessary to register the insufficiency of a purely anthropological and instrumental understanding of technology, according to which humans have technology in their hands: "This work is therefore neither only a human activity nor a mere means within such activity. The merely instrumental, merely anthropological definition of technology is therefore in principle untenable. And it cannot be rounded out by being referred back to some metaphysical or religious explanation that undergirds it".[50] Moreover, if human beings do not possess technology as an instrument in their hands, if it isn't human beings who hold technology in their hands, but technology that holds the human being in its hands, then it is also not possible "to overcome technology through morals. Technology is neither merely, nor primarily something human. Technology is, in its *essence*, a very specific mode of manifestation of being and the contemporary human being must work its way through the destiny of Being".[51] But what does it mean to work our way through the destiny of Being?

If humans are always governed by the destiny of unconcealment, this does not imply "a fate that compels".[52] By contrast, according to Heidegger humans become free precisely by way of responding to destiny's claim, toward which they stand in the position of listeners (*Hörender*), rather than servants (*Höriger*). What does this mean with respect to contemporary technology and the danger it carries within

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[47] Heidegger (2003: 74). Translation modified.

[48] Heidegger (1966: 52). My italics.

[49] Heidegger (2003: 63).

[50] Heidegger (1977: 21).

[51] Heidegger (1986: 433). My translation.

[52] Heidegger (1977: 25).

itself? It means that in order to 'overcome' the age of technological nihilism we would need a modification of the framework of meaning, in which the totality of being reveals itself; however, such modification is not a human power, it cannot be decided by humans: "The world only changes if Being strikes us anew".[53] The ordaining of Being, the call of destiny, addresses the human being, it elicits a response. Being human means responding and corresponding to the address of unconcealment. Therefore, even if the human being cannot modify the mode of manifestation of being, even if we cannot provoke a new kind of unconcealment, we are nonetheless called to prepare to its advent, in order to be able to correspond to it, should it happen right in the midst of danger. Such preparation is the task of "meditative thinking",[54] which opposes the calculatory thinking of technology.

Disposing oneself to listen to the call harbored in the *Ge-stell* (in this sense, Heidegger quotes Hölderlin: "But where danger is, grows / The saving power also"[55]) also means to relate to the products of technology in a new way, i.e., using them but at the same time keeping our freedom from them, thus being able to do without them at any time. Heidegger's suggestion reads as follows: "We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them alone, as things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon *something higher*".[56] This kind of behavior, which is both a 'yes' and a 'no' to the inevitable use of the products of technology is famously phrased, as is well known, "*releasement toward things*",[57] i.e., a kind of abandonment to and from things.

Heidegger's analysis thus amounts to a historical or mystical conception of technology as destiny: Heidegger opposes an onto-centric conception to the anthropocentric conception of technology. He opposes technology as destiny of Being to technology as a work of humans. In some texts this conception is enhanced with more explicit hints at an 'a-theological' or 'anti-theological' (compared to its Christian counterpart) 'theology'. In the exoteric texts from the 1930es, which were made available to the public from the late 1980es onwards, the more originary kind of revealing to which meditative thinking has to prepare itself acquires the meaning of an advent of new gods, "the future ones", or the "last god",[58] who alone can initiate a turn of age toward something beyond nihilism.[59]

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[53] Heidegger (1986: 433). My translation.

[54] Heidegger (1966: 53).

[55] Heidegger (1977: 28).

[56] Heidegger (1966: 54). My italics.

[57] Heidegger (1966: 54).

[58] Heidegger (2012: 313, 321).

[59] Cf. on this topic Esposito (2017), particularly chapters V and VIII.

6   The Critique of the Anthropological-Instrumental Perspective

What stance should we take with regard to Heidegger's onto-centrism? Heidegger wrote in the aforementioned quote that technology is "neither only a human activity nor a mere means within such activity. The merely instrumental, merely anthropological definition of technology is therefore in principle untenable".[60] As we pointed out at the beginning, this is one of the most significant achievements in Heidegger's reflection and I can only agree with his conclusion; however, I would immediately add that if technology is not a mere instrument in human hands, this isn't due to its historical-fateful origin, as Heidegger would have it, be it *techne* or *Ge-stell*, but rather by virtue of the human's constitutive belonging to technology, which Heidegger does not and cannot see from his 'ontological' perspective. As is well known, Heidegger was always uninterested about, if not dismissive of any genealogical inquiry about the human being. His critical distancing from philosophical anthropology, which was flourishing in Germany around the time of publication of *Being and Time*, is no mystery. If we now raise a genealogical question about *Dasein*, the human being, i.e., the living being that understands emotionally and speaks, that is open to the world and to possibilities, that possesses a body with a distinctive shape, the human being that we ourselves are, there emerges an import of technology which prevents us from interpreting it anthropocentrically, as if it were something added from without to a readily available human being, who simply avails himself of it.

This is the key point. If technology is "neither only a human activity nor a mere means within such activity", this is because human life is technological life; our very humanized organisms bear witness, in their configuration, to the work of technology.[61] Technology and technological doing – from the artificial manipulation of the environment through the construction and use of exosomatic instruments, to the invention and utilization of linguistic signs – are variously involved in the twisted path that leads to the emergence, in the realm of living beings, of *Homo* and *Homo sapiens,* as well as the constitution of the human identity of each member of our species. Technology contributes to the very path of anthropogenesis and the humanization of life (both phylogenesis and ontogenesis). The human being could become what it is, i.e., a biologically paradoxical entity that is uniquely un-fit and un-specialized, as well as exceptionally plastic, thanks to technology, which makes it possible to realize an adaptation to the environment that no longer revolves exclusively around the body.[62] The human body no longer occupies a central role in adaptation precisely because organs, functions, and bodily processes are replaced by artificial instruments. To the extent that it is replaced, the body is de-activated, thus

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[60] Heidegger (1977: 21).

[61] For a more thorough exploration of this issue see Di Martino (2019).

[62] This is Paul Alsberg's view (cf. Alsberg 1937), which finds an echo in the contemporary scientific theory of "niche construction" (cf. Odling-Smee 1988; Odling-Smee, Laland, Feldman 2003).

becoming open to unheard-of possibilities of transformation, regressions, and progressions, that move toward a growing physiological and neuro-psychological plasticity.

From a philosophical viewpoint, the key notion is that of *feedback*: technological activity 'feeds back' on the users and modifies them, i.e., it produces auto-plastic and 'preter-intentional' retroactive effects on their organisms.[63] Such effects transcend the problem-solving perspective: a kind of agency that is oriented toward pre-determined goals (for instance, our ancestors' use of lithic instruments in order to hit, cut, grate, get nourishment, shelter, etc.) has retroactive effects, both physiological and neuro-psychical, on the users' organisms. This is the reason why in hominids the canine teeth shrunk, their face became shorter, their skull assumed an oval shape, the facial traits became finer, the volume and plasticity of the brain increased, socializing behavior developed extraordinarily, the time for maturation slowed down, etc. At this phylogenetic level the modification does not happen directly, but rather, indirectly, as the contemporary theory of "niche construction"[64] explains: 'technological' or 'techno-cultural' behaviors modify the environment. They ease external selective pressure and in so doing they interfere with the dynamics of evolutionary processes. A recursive movement is thus initiated: organisms modify the environments by which they are, in turn, modified according to the principle of natural selection.

In light of the principle of feedback, we can therefore state that it is not just the human being who invents technology but, to the same extent and reciprocally, it is technology, i.e., the use of instruments, that invents the human being, revealing itself as hominizing and humanizing. The anthropocentric conception of technology is, therefore, fallacious in its very principle, since it ignores *what instruments make of us*. While the attention we pay to the use of a given exosomatic instrument is, in a sense, obvious, it is not at all obvious to direct our attention to the *use* that the instrument *makes of us*, i.e., to the reciprocal effect it has on the users. This is the fundamental point: the use of artificial instruments produces forms of feedback on their users, transforming them into beings that they weren't yet and that they couldn't have become, had those effects been missing. Since Heidegger rejects any kind of genealogical inquiry as non-philosophical and chooses the ontological-fateful path instead, he forecloses the possibility to grasp adequately the power of technology, i.e., its 'productivity'. Even though he rightly questions the anthropological conception of technology and he develops his 'ontological' perspective, he ignores the specific 'transformative' and 'constitutive' power of technology understood as a kind of *doing* and as a set of *devices*, instruments, and machines. For Heidegger, the human being's belonging to technology is nothing but another name for the human dependency on Being and of the epochal horizons of meaning on the modes of 'epoch-making' of Being (whereby it gives itself by way of slipping away). It would be necessary, as Nietzsche would put it, to dream more truthfully,

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[63] I delved into this discussion in Di Martino (2017).

[64] Cf. footnote n. 62.

i.e., to conceive of a new relationship with technology, since the human being *made itself* (and always makes himself) in the bouncing back of that form of technological doing which we could call, as a whole, culture.

7 'Using of Means' and 'Revealings'

Every time Heidegger calls *Techne* into question he is careful to distinguish it from any technological activity. He specifies that *techne* must not be understood primarily as an art or an ability in carrying out procedures, let alone the building of objects and instruments, nor the transformation of things through the use of machines: "what is decisive in *techne* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing".[65] All operative and operational import of technology, according to Heidegger, does not belong originarily to *techne*, which, for the Greeks, indicates an attitude, i.e., a kind of knowledge or mode of understanding beings, which is grounded in a mode of revealing. Technological doing merely follows: the practical treatment of beings, i.e., the technological action, is inscribed in the framework delineated by a horizon of manifestation – "a well-defined mode of the manifestation of being" – which constitutes the essence of technology.

The same goes for the *Ge-stell*, as we saw: it does not consist in the set of operations and devices with which we transform reality, but rather, win the horizon of sense – in the unconcealment – within which we interpret nature and all beings as an employable standing reserve. This is its *essence*. "Everything (beings as a whole) from the outset arranges itself in the horizon of utility, the dominance, or better yet, the *orderability* of what is to be seized"; in the age of Enframing the human being "sees the particular being in the horizon of usability".[66] Nature, beings in their totality, manifests itself "a priori" – a historical-fateful a priori – *as* standing-reserve, *as* an organized whole of calculable forces, *as* extractible, liable to ordering, usable. Technological activity – the extraction of oil from the underground or the exploitation of 'human material' – follows the *Ge-stell* as a mode of revealing.

For the aforementioned reasons, Heidegger does not and cannot see how technological *action* is, on the contrary, productive of *revealing*, i.e., endowed with the capacity to disclose an interpretation of being that is not 'already there', behind it, and directs it. What we called 'preter-intentional feedback' is, in sum, precisely what prevents us from conceiving the Heideggerian ranking of *techne* and 'technology', i.e., of *techne* or *Ge-stell* as modes of revealing and technology as doing-handling, as a using of means. In Heidegger's perspective, technological doing *only* represents the *consequence* of a determined mode of revealing, but it has no power to supply the revealing, i.e., to produce vision and manifestation. Heidegger never

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[65] Heidegger (1977: 13).

[66] Heidegger (2003: 61–62).

suspects that technological action may have specific and decisive effects at the level of manifestation, i.e., that it molds the horizons of sense within which things reveal themselves in their meanings. This is the intrinsic limit of the fateful conception of technology. For instance, Heidegger does not see how the creation and use of external 'signs', i.e., a specific technological-cultural activity, determines, within the same species '*sapiens*', different experiences of memory and a different consciousness of time.[67] In human communities bereft of any kind of writing, the body of cognitions pertaining to the fundamental operations of life and significant events is entrusted to oral transmission and to the capacity to preserve images (eidetic memory). The nature of these means determines the kind of social memory and of temporal awareness of such communities. A different experience of memory is found in communities that can avail themselves of artificial signs, i.e., of auxiliary instruments of memorization (from eagle feathers among the native Americans to knots made with rope in ancient Peru) used to record events or account for goods. The production of artificial signs gives rise to a certain exteriorization and ensuing extension of memory. A significant turn happens with the appearance of different forms of writing: pictographic, ideographic, hieroglyphic, logo-semiotic, all the way up to syllabic. With writing, an impressive increment of social externalized memory occurs. The first 'literary' works, for instance, make their appearance. However, with the invention of alphabetic writing, thanks to its peculiar characteristics,[68] we witness a further exteriorization of social memory. When the knowledge of the community starts translating into the signs of alphabetic writing, it opens up to a hitherto unheard-of possibility of hoarding. Alphabet inaugurates the first 'digitalization' of speech and with it the *possibility* of a world-archive of knowledge, which is what has come to reality today with our digitalized libraries, once again thanks to the availability of instruments and hardware for memorization. The point here, then, is not a destiny of Being, but rather the transformative power of technological-cultural activity, i.e., the transformation of the horizons of sense and experience that come with it.

If we moved forward in this direction, one would have to show, as I did elsewhere,[69] how the use of alphabetical writing deeply modified the linguistic-mental habits of the Greeks. That kind of use fed back – at the ontogenetic level, directly – and modified the user. It had the wholly 'preter-intentional' effect of reshaping "the way the mind thinks as it speaks",[70] thereby transforming the attitudes of its users and disclosing a peculiar mode of revealing. As Havelock and others have shown,[71] in fact, the very emergence of the horizon of *theoria* and the 'logical mind' is genealogically connected to a specific technological-cultural *doing* and cannot be simply ascribed, as one might be tempted to do following Heidegger,

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[67] Vygotskij devoted famous investigations to this topic (cf. for instance Vygotskij 1960).

[68] Cf. Havelock (1963) and Havelock (1976).

[69] Cf. Di Martino (1998).

[70] Havelock (1986: 125).

[71] Besides Havelock, Gelb (1963), McLuhan (1963), Ong (1982) are worth mentioning.

to a destiny of Being and ethnological-spiritual excellence of the Greek who responded and corresponded to it. Without thereby denying their exceptional talents, one should be inclined to think that the Greeks became intelligent in the 'philosophical' sense through their linguistic activity, which was restructured by the use of the alphabetic *medium*. This latter modified radically their way of constructing their discourse and oriented it in a logical-visual direction. It is along this path that the Greeks started to talk about "being", "idea", "essence", "being as such", as so forth. Cultural objects of this kind cannot be given outside the transformation of language-thinking that was inaugurated by the alphabetic practice and culminated with the appearance of philosophical *logos*. If, then, for Heidegger *techne* means the relationship to things in light of ideas, one should say, thereby reversing Heidegger's analysis, that such *techne* is made possible by technology, and not the other way around. The relationship between using means and revealings thus needs to be reconceived in its complexity and circularity.

8   Technology and Violence

As I mentioned above, for Heidegger *Machenshaft*, i.e., machination, and the *Ge-stell*, i.e., the Enframing, are essentially violence. With reference to modern technology, we find ubiquitously in Heidegger's texts expressions such as annihilation, subjugation, and exploitation (of the soil, of nature, of beings, of humans). The difference between the pro-ductive mode of revealing of *techne* and the challenging mode of revealing of Enframing seems to lie precisely in their respective degree of violence. In the conference of 1953, Heidegger suggests, for instance, the different relationship with the Rhine river of two different technological devices: on the one hand an ancient wooden bridge that connects the two shores, on the other the power plant built in its waters. In the first case, the wooden bridge is incorporated in the river. The bridge is, in one sense, put to the river's service and stands in a harmonious relationship with it. In the second case, it is the river that is incorporated in the power plant; the river is 'employed' as producer of hydric force and hence of electric energy: it is demanded of the river (*gestellt*) that it produce electric power. The challenging demand of Enframing grabs nature by the neck, as it were, to the point of chocking it, and it demands of it all of her resources, in order to use them right away or store them for future employment. These are two different ways of relating 'technologically' to nature and beings in their totality: the first mode intervenes and modifies, but without destroying, while the second mode subjugates, upsets and exhausts.

However, as Heidegger observes already around the mid 1930es, *Machenschaft* or *Ge-stell* simply brings Platonic *techne* to its extreme consequences. It completes the interpretation of beings as *enduring* presence, which starts coming to fruition with Plato's *idea*. When Plato transforms the meaning of this term, which in common usage indicated the visible look of a thing, in order to let it signify the model, the ideal form, the constant element, and the true 'being' (only visible to the imma-

terial eye of the mind) of all that we encounter in our transient experience, he sets the first stone of that domination of thinking over 'being' which finds its zenith in the *Ge-stell*. Plato initiates the long history that Heidegger calls 'metaphysics', whose conclusion is the "dominance of thinking as *ratio* (as both understanding and reason) over the *Being* of beings".[72] From Plato, to Descartes, to Nietzsche, for Heidegger the history of metaphysics is, at bottom, a history of nihilism. It all begins with Plato's interpretation of the being of beings as *idea*, it then moves on with the reduction of reality to an object of representation (of *ego cogito*), and it then culminates with the understanding of the totality of being as standing reserve, as raw material available to Nietzsche's will to power, or will to will, i.e., the last shape of modern subjectivity, of which Jünger describes the planetary operative performance. *Ge-stell* and nihilism constitute the destination, which is inscribed in the transition from thinking to philosophy in the Greek beginnings. The philosophical *logos* positions itself frontally towards being, in an antagonistic stance. It subjects being to its jurisdiction and measures. To the extent that it emerges as a relationship with being dominated by the idea, metaphysics is from the very beginning, albeit implicitly, a calculating cognition, which is oriented to imposition and subjugation.

It seems, however, difficult to ascribe the violence to *physis* to metaphysics, and hence to the West and the emergence of the attitude Heidegger calls *techne*.[73] If we adopt a broadly Aristotelian perspective and consider violence any action that is exerted from the outside on a spontaneous inclination or natural movement, the West does not have an exclusive prerogative on violence. Heidegger himself illustrates this point in some famous pages of *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Reading and commenting on the first chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Heidegger brings to light the meaning of being-human for the Greeks. In *Antigone* we read: "Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing uncannier than man bestirs itself, rising up beyond him".[74] The human being is the uncanny insofar as it exerts violence to face the other uncanny, the *physis*, the reality in its "overwhelming sway".[75] *Physis*, to which the human being belongs and against which it stands, is in fact originally violent and uncanny as well.[76] Heidegger observes that the first strophe and antistrophe in the first chorus "name the sea, the earth, the animal as the overwhelming that the violence-doer", that is, the human being, "allows to break into openness in all its excessive violence".[77] The human being breaks the earth open with her plow; she catches and subjugates animals and she relates to the predominant (*physis*) through stratagems, *to machanoen*, i.e., availing himself of the kind of knowledge that is *techne*. What identifies the *deinon* on the human side, i.e., on the side of the violence-doer, is thus the fundamental and decisive character of *techne*, whereas the *deinon* as the pre-

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[72] Heidegger (2000: 190).

[73] On this point see Strummiello (2001).

[74] Heidegger (2002: 159).

[75] Heidegger (2000: 159).

[76] For a more in-depth reading of these passages cf. Mazzarella (2002).

[77] Heidegger (2000: 166).

dominant is identified with the term *dike:* "Thus, the *deinon* as the overwhelming *(dike)* and the *deinon* as the violence-doing *(techne)* stand over against each other"; "*techne* breaks out against *dike*".[78] A few lines down Heidegger clarifies his thought as follows: "*Techne* is the violence-doing of knowing. The reciprocal relation between them is the happening of uncanniness".[79] Furthermore: "Being-human, as the urgency of apprehending and gathering, is the urging into the freedom of taking over *techne*, the knowing setting-to-work of Being. Thus there is history".[80]

The vocation to outwit the predominant through stratagem, thereby instituting a 'technological' relationship with physis, is thus no prerogative of the 'metaphysical' human being, but of the human being as such. For sure, the metaphysical human being – the West – moved significantly forward in the capacity to manipulate nature and beings, perhaps showing the highest degree of violence ever seen, which is directly proportional to its extraordinary efficacy. However, regardless of any ethnic and cultural specification, there is no stance of the human being vis-à-vis *physis* that is absolutely non-antagonistic. Every technological action is violent *in its own way*, even when it is not or does not want to be destructive, precisely to the extent to which it intervenes artificially on *physis*, forcing or modifying its course. This holds also in cases where technological actions set out to promote or sustain the natural course of *physis*, such as when we plant a stick next to the stem of a young plant in order to support and direct its growth, or we create an artificial prosthesis to heal a leg fracture. Technology is a constitutive dimension of the relationship between human being and the environment. It is intertwined with human phylogenesis and ontogenesis. Technological activity essentially harbors within itself the will to alter and change *physis*, which can assume the form of acceleration or intensification, or else of an effraction, a distancing, a violation, or a laceration, as it happens since time immemorial starting with the construction and utilization of the first lithic tools, or in the past ten thousand years, with practices of proto-breeding and proto-agriculture. In sum, technological action brings with it the sense of domination, control, and programming of nature. Where does this lead us?

9   Toward a Politics of Ordaining

With advent of *Ge-stell,* i.e., the age of machines, technological feasibility was radicalized to a previously unheard-of extent: the transformative power of technology increased exponentially, and it extended over the whole of being. This is the sense of Jünger's "total mobilization", which leads the human being on the verge of self-production. Western techno-science reached a power of modification and production of reality that has no comparison in the human journey on planet Earth. With it,

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[78] Heidegger (2000: 171).

[79] Heidegger (2000: 176).

[80] Heidegger (2000: 181).

the "danger" of extreme violence grows, causing a degree of destruction that leaves nothing outside of itself. Heidegger, like many others, denounced this danger.

What stance should we take, then, with regard to contemporary technological feasibility? Let us reconsider Heidegger's following statement: "No single man, no group of men, no commission of prominent statesmen, scientists, and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry, can brake or direct the progress of history in the atomic age. No *merely human* organization is capable of gaining dominion over it".[81] How should we evaluate such vision?

If it means that cultures, life-forms, historical worlds, and the horizons of manifestations within which we see things as we see them, do not ultimately depend on projects and deliberations of these or those people, even though they are realized through the indefinite plurality of operations, decisions and life-paths of entire generations, that is, if it wants to underscore the anonymous and trans-subjective dimensions of cultural changes, then we can agree with Heidegger. Historical worlds happen and become modified following the paths of an unpredictable development. This is because they represent the vectorial sum of an unsurveyable array of conditions, events, and influences that are unpredictably combined. In this sense, we can say that the *Ge-stell* is a destined form of ordaining, like any other manifestative horizon, if by that we mean to underscore this dimension of irreducibility. It is not a plaything in human hands, which might be steered at will by humans.

But if from this premise we draw the conclusion that the agency of individuals and groups, of committees of scientists, technocrats and statesmen or conferences of economic and industrial leaders, to paraphrase Heidegger's expressions above, are useless, then things change. What comes into play is a definite *mode* of conceiving the irreducibility mentioned above. I contend that the stance-takings, decisions, praxes of humans with their direct and indirect effects, do fall under the category of conditions, events and influences that, combined in various ways, give rise to the developments of cultures. Human agency is not foreign to fateful ordaining. On the contrary, they are constitutively part of it. They feature among the threads of the tapestry. This means that the fateful ordaining, if we still want to use this expression, does not come from a place 'above', as it were, that has no connection with the place 'below' of human initiatives. Rather, fateful ordaining delineates itself in the interplay and interaction of these levels and it includes all of our decisions and responses. Therefore, *contra* Heidegger, we *must* problematize, take a stance, intervene, and negotiate relentlessly, thereby exercising at various levels the responsibilities that befall us. The relationship with technology (with the atomic age, or the age of genetic engineering or artificial intelligence) continues to be *necessarily* a political and moral problem, *too*. This fact does not contradict the recognition of the anonymous dimension of historical and cultural change.

We must say more. "Brak[ing] or direct[ing] feasibility" (*Machbarkeit*) pertains to the politics of boundaries that is part of 'human' beings, who are characterized by a structural exposure to excess, i.e., by a peculiar absence of limits and instinctual

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[81] Heidegger (1966: 52).

prescriptions characterizing the species. This absence implies the necessity of a constant self-positing of limits, with the ensuing creation of 'institutional' limits. The relationship with feasibility – be it human cloning or the atomic bomb – is a moral and political problem that cannot be eluded and that humans always had to face. Unless we interpret what Günther Anders calls the "*idée fixe* of the third industrial revolution",[82] i.e. that "*what can be done must be done*", or, in other words, that "*that the feasible* (das Machbare) *is obligatory*",[83] again, like Heidegger, as a metaphysical destiny, thereby covering up the set of very historical and earthly interests and projects, that govern certain orientations of contemporary techno-science toward well-defined tendencies of the market.

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[82] Anders (1980: 32). My translation.

[83] Anders (1980: 24). My translation.

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Part II
Living

Living, Being, Thinging. Remarks on the Fate of the Animal in Heidegger's Thought

Adriano Ardovino

Abstract This article offers an *excursus* on the evolution of Heidegger's thinking on the animal, tracing the development of the philosopher's thought from his early phenomenology of life and more mature ontology of existence to his later work that focused on the phenomenology of world. Following this trajectory, the article will discriminate between two distinct Heideggerian approaches to the experiencing, naming, and thinking of the animal. The first, which is tied to metaphysics and ontology, underdetermines the animal by interpreting it privatively with respect to the human, and as a living entity that is poor in world. The second expresses a phenomenology without ontology, and reinterprets the animal in light of a notion of world that is both pre- and post-metaphysical, thus characterizing it as a thing which gathers the world.

1 From Phenomenology to Ontology, or from Living to Being

The pages that follow constitute an *excursus* on Heidegger's conceptual treatment of all that which, in today's language, is negatively defined as non-human life forms, or non-human living beings (things, entities), and which are traditionally understood as plants, animals, and gods.[1] In particular, we will concentrate on the second

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[1] Cf. for example, the passage from Seneca (*Epistles* 124: 14) cited in § 42 of *Being and Time*: "Quattuor hae naturae sunt, arboris, animalis, hominis, dei: haec duo, quae rationalia sunt, eandem naturam habent, illo diversa sunt quod alterum inmortale, alterum mortale est".

A. Ardovino (✉)
Scienze Filosofiche, Pedagogiche ed Economico-Quantitative, University of Chieti-Pescara, Chieti, Abruzzo, Italy
e-mail: adriano.ardovino@unich.it

of these three terms – animals. However, a complete analysis of the non-human dimension in Heidegger's thought would need to go beyond all three, in order to include the world as such.

Given the space limitations of this short contribution, we have chosen to begin with the lectures that Heidegger gave in the years immediately following the publication of *Being and Time* (1927). These texts essentially remained within the orbit of the project that was defined by fundamental ontology, which elaborates the question of the sense and meaning of the being as such. Heidegger's is an ontology that is – and not only secondarily – a phenomenology, a hermeneutics, an analytic, and finally, a metaphysics of the finite human Dasein: the existence and being-in-the-worldness that characterizes the human being as such.

In this context, we will immediately begin with the first premise: the "life" and the "living", that had been at the center of Heidegger's philosophical project since the early 1920s, in the form of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ontology of factical life (understood as the original phenomenon [*das Urphänomen*] of phenomenology), gradually gave way to the centrality of being-there (*Dasein*) and of being (*Sein*). This was a process of ontological radicalization (both terminological and conceptual) that found stability, albeit temporarily, and its most notable configuration, in the divisions published within *Being and Time*: a text in which the ontological retrocession of the phenomenon of life is clearly affirmed.[2] Before concentrating on the animal as a modality of non-human life, it is therefore important to briefly define the conceptual destiny of life and living that could be classed under the scope of Heidegger's fundamental ontology.

Heidegger's first use of the verb "to live" is reserved for the "we" to which *Being and Time* is addressed: we who "live already in an understanding of being."[3] This is a phenomenological and pre-ontological use of the word that will occur in other areas of the text, such as to indicate "the world in which we live"[4] or even to highlight the inauthentic "*predilection* of Dasein to be 'lived' by the world in which it actually is."[5] In this sense the term draws attention to a Dasein who is "'lived' by the commonsense ambiguity of publicness in which no one resolves, which has always been made its decision".[6]

The first use of the noun "life", instead, appears within an analysis that is already ontological:

> The totality of beings can, with respect to its various regions [*Bezirken*], become the field [*Feld*] where particular areas of knowledge [*Sachgebiete*] are exposed and delimited. These areas – for example, history, nature, space, *life* [emphasis added], human being, language, and so on – can in their turn become thematized as objects [*Gegenständen*] of scientific

[2] On this conceptual treatment of life before and after *Being and Time*, I would refer readers to Mazzarella (2002) and Ardovino (1998, 2010, 2016).

[3] Heidegger (2010, 3). Please note that the translations cited in this article may reflect slight lexical modifications with respect to the original text.

[4] Heidegger (2010, 60).

[5] Heidegger (2010, 182) (cf. also 183).

[6] Heidegger (2010, 275).

investigations. Scientific research demarcates and first establishes these areas of knowledge in a rough and ready fashion. The elaboration of the area [*Gebiet*] in its fundamental structures is in a way already accomplished by prescientific experience and interpretation of the regions of being [*Seinsbezirke*] to which the area of knowledge is itself confined. The resulting "fundamental concepts" comprise the guidelines for the first concrete disclosure of the area.[7]

In this sense, life is not merely a correlation of experience and of a prescientific way of speaking, but is also the object of a science, like biology, which in turn tries to define "the kind of being [*Seinsart*] of living beings as such"[8] – though without success. On the topic, Heidegger states:

> For as a positive science, biology, too, can never find and determine this [scil. ontological] structure, it must presuppose it and continually make use of it. This structure itself, however, can be explicated philosophically as the a priori condition for the thematic objects of biology only if it is understood beforehand as a structure of Dasein. Only in terms of an orientation toward the ontological structure thus understood, can "life" as a constitution of being be defined a priori in a privative way.[9]

Here, it can be seen that a three-level scenario emerges, in which life, in its everyday fullness, is attributed ontological negativity by passing through an attempt at scientific definition. Daily (prescientific) experience, (biological) science of life, and (regional) ontology of life corresponds to the three levels or stages, though none of these perspectives would be able to arrive at the fourth and most original level, which is constituted by a (fundamental) ontology of being. Heidegger states:

> In the order of possible understanding and interpretation, biology as the "science of life" is rooted in the ontology of Dasein, although not exclusively in it. Life has its own kind of being, but it is essentially accessible only in Dasein. The ontology of life takes place by way of a privative interpretation. It determines what must be the case if there can be anything like just-being-alive. Life is neither pure objective presence, nor is it Dasein. On the other hand, Dasein should never be defined ontologically by regarding it as life – (ontologically undetermined) and then as something else on top of that.[10]

Life, in other words, is a neither-nor, as well as a no more-not yet – a goal that is out of focus, and always looked at from an unchangeable perspective. It is thus a sort of no man's land, on which no radical philosophical discourse of any kind can be built. This would not only be because a "philosophy of life" risks saying "about as much as the 'botany of plants'"[11] but also because "[t]he basic ontological constitution of 'living', is a problem in its own right and can be only reductively and privatively in terms of the ontology of Dasein".[12]

An identical discourse is also valid for death, if we suppose that

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[7] Heidegger (2010, 7).

[8] Heidegger (2010, 10).

[9] Heidegger (2010, 54).

[10] Heidegger (2010, 46).

[11] Heidegger (2010, 43–44).

[12] Heidegger (2010, 194).

> In the broadest sense, death is a phenomenon of life. Life must be understood as a kind of being to which belongs a being-in-the-world. It can only be defined in a privative orientation to Dasein. Dasein, too, can be considered as pure life. For the biological and physiological line of questioning, it then moves into the sphere of being which we know as the *world of animals* [emphasis added] and plants […]. An ontological problematic underlies this biological and ontic investigation of death. We must still ask how the essence of death is defined in terms of the essence of life. The ontic inquiry into death has always already decided about this. More or less clarified preconceptions of life and death are operative in it. These preliminary concepts need to be sketched out in the ontology of Dasein. Within the ontology of Dasein, which has priority over an ontology of life, the existential analytic of death is subordinate to the fundamental constitution of Dasein […]. The existential interpretation of death is prior to any biology and ontology of life.[13]

Heidegger's reference to death thus introduces us to the problem of the conception of a mere living thing (*Nur-Lebendes*). Starting from § 47 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger distinguishes "the ending [*Enden*] characteristic of Dasein from the ending of a life", which is understood as "a going-out-of-the-world of what is only alive."[14] Thus, while the ending of Dasein is a dying (*Sterben*) demarcated in its fundamental and ontological value – although it is not devoid of an ontologic-physiological dimension – the "ending of what is only alive we formulate terminologically as perishing [*Verenden*]."

However, this 'dry' distinction between the purely living that perishes and the purely existing (*Dasein*) that dies is made more ambiguous and complex by a third "deformalization" of ending, which is the demising (*Ableben*) of the Dasein. The Dasein "can end without authentically dying, though on the other hand, qua Dasein, it does not simply perish. We call this intermediate phenomenon its demise."[15] Even if "we can say that Dasein never perishes", we must push ourselves to state that "Dasein can only demise as long as it dies."[16] In this sense, demising (and the eminently negative understanding of life that it once again carries with it, as something from which one departs or separates oneself: *Ab-leben* – ceasing to live) turns out to be nothing more than an inauthentic possible ending for the Dasein. However, this is simultaneously founded on the authentic end –on dying, which is distinct from any "lived experience [*Erleben*] of the factical demise",[17] as well as from pure disappearance and merely perishing, which can meet the simply living.[18] This is as the simply living, unlike the Dasein, do not relate to death in a way that is either authentic or inauthentic, even if its "remains" seem to be the same as those of the Dasein.[19]

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[13] Heidegger (2010, 229).

[14] Heidegger (2010, 224).

[15] Heidegger (2010, 229).

[16] Heidegger (2010, 229).

[17] Heidegger (2010, 230).

[18] Cf. Heidegger (2010, 233).

[19] Cf. Heidegger (2010, 221): "Even the objectively present corpse is, viewed theoretically, still a possible object for pathological anatomy whose understanding is oriented toward the idea of life. Merely-being-objectively-present is 'more' than a lifeless, material thing. In it we encounter something unliving which has lost its life".

There can be no doubt that Heidegger's negative characterization of the merely living and the merely perishing has enormous repercussions on the status of the animal in his thought. That is to say, on the status of a non-human living being that has neither a death (because, strictly speaking, it does not die, but only perishes) nor an existence (which is always understood in terms of fundamental ontology), since the latter is reserved exclusively for Dasein as a being-in-the-world.[20] While it is not the subject of explicit analysis in *Being and Time*, the animal appears to be relegated to the desolate territory of bare life (neither dying nor existing),[21] and is profoundly separated from the human Dasein. For such an understanding of the animal, the definition of man provided by the Greek *zoon* (equipped with *logos*) is just as misleading as that of the Latin *animal* (equipped with *ratio*).

Indeed, the small opening that Heidegger seems to leave open for the living animal (while denying it existence and death) in terms of temporality and the phenomenon of affection does not help in providing resolution. If, on one hand, the "beings that are objectively present in the world, are moreover, *worldless* (weltlos) in themselves, can never 'touch' each other, neither can 'be' 'together with the other'",[22] on the other hand "[h]ow the *stimulation* and *touching* of the senses in beings that are simply alive are to be ontologically defined, how and where in general the being of animals is constituted, for example, by a 'time', remains a problem."[23] Given that the processes of nature are either "living or lifeless",[24] years immediately following *Being and Time* saw the animal (like the plant) remain confined to an obscure ontological region of life and the living.[25]

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[20] Cf. Heidegger (2010, 39).

[21] Cf. on this theme, McNeill (1999), and the crucial work of Agamben (2004). Cf. also Colony (2007), Calarco (2008), Gustafsson (2013).

[22] Heidegger (2010, 52).

[23] Heidegger (2010, 317). Cf. Buchanan (2007).

[24] Heidegger (2010, 245).

[25] Cf. Heidegger (1996, 71–72): "Animals and plants live. Material things – 'nature' in a certain sense – are objectively present [*vorhanden*], useful things are at hand [*zuhanden*]. From the terminological point of view, a paradox results in which man does not live, but exists […]. Unlike the way of being of things such as, for example, stones and debris, things such as chalk, sponge, blackboard, door, window have a totally different way of being, which we designate as their handiness. Moreover, there are 'realities' like space and numbers, which are nothing, and that, to the extent that they are also something, we say that they persist [*bestehen*], that they have duration [*Bestand*]. Thus, with regard to the different modes of being, we distinguish: the existing: humans; the living: plants, animals; the objectively present: material things; the present at hand: things of use in the widest sense; the persisting [*Bestehende*]: numbers and space. According to these basic modes of being, we can mark domains [*Bereiche*], although this regional aspect is not primary or essential. The existing, the living, the objectively present, the present at hand [and the persisting] are not regions juxtaposed next to each other but rather only methodological concepts-of-grasping". Cf. again Heidegger (2006, 17), where the place of the stone is held by a planetary cluster: "A table, a mountain, the moon, but also a dog, a lark, a rose do not exist, but they certainly are […]. They possess their specific being: table – present at hand, moon – objectively present, lark and rose live, number and point persist. The human exists. This being that exists, we call it *Dasein*". Cf. Ardovino (2018).

2   Being as Living, or the Animal as a Living Being

The main text in which Heidegger delivers his reflections on the animal in the period after *Being and Time* is in the set of 1929–1930 lectures called *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. There the prevailing point of view which is once again steeped in Dasein ontology, according to which (and on the basis of which) Heidegger finally outlines the ontology of the living that *Being and Time* had only evoked –within which, in turn, he sketches a more specific ontology of the animal.

The premise is very explicit. "Animal" – just like a stone, plant, or human – designates not so much this or that particular being, but rather a kind of being.[26] If the animal is a being, its specific manner of being (also shared with the plant) is called "life".[27] As such, "we can only determine the animality of animal if we are clear about what constitutes *the living character of a living being*, as distinct from the non-living being," such as the stone.[28] In this way, "*that way of being* which we call *life*,"[29] if not "the *essence of life*,"[30] becomes clear, though it is accessible only in the framework of a "*metaphysical interpretation of life*".[31]

The answer to the question of the essence of life, the living, and the living being passes first, for Heidegger, through a reflection on the organism. Again, it has to be noted that the organism "is no longer a name for this or that being at all, but rather designates a *particular and fundamental manner of being*."[32] In this context, Heidegger critically confronts the biology of his time (though not without assimilating its reflections in part) and employs a considerable number of conceptual determinations, which remain ontological. Above all, he is guided by a particular approach, referred to as 'the problem of world', whose elaboration is the "theme of a *fundamental problem of metaphysics*."[33] In this regard, Heidegger famously articulates three guiding theses: "[1.] the stone (material object) is *wordless*; [2.] the animal is *poor in world*; [3.] man is *world-forming*."[34] Again Heidegger emphasizes the centrality of the human Dasein: the *Weltlosigkeit* of the stone and the *Weltarmung* of the animal are nothing other than modalities that lack the human's *Weltbildung*. In this sense, the determinations in which Heidegger attributes to the animal as a living organism (as well as to life in that capacity) are in themselves defective, despite their depth, subtly, and richness – characteristics that are otherwise respectable.[35]

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[26] Cf. Heidegger (1995, 62).

[27] Cf. Heidegger (1995, 188, 191).

[28] Heidegger (1995, 179).

[29] Heidegger (1995, 225).

[30] Heidegger (1995, 235).

[31] Heidegger (1995, 189).

[32] Heidegger (1995, 235).

[33] Heidegger (1995, 178).

[34] Heidegger (1995, 177).

[35] On this point, see, among others, Illetterati (2002).

   The unsatisfactory nature of this approach emerges in various places in the lectures. First, this comes in the form of a conscious oscillation. For instance, if Heidegger attributes the animal with 'poverty in world' in a manner that suggests the existence of a relationship with the world, even if it is lacking and undetermined, it makes it clear that Heidegger identifies a real "animal world".[36] Conversely, this also justifies a simultaneous "having and not-having of the world"[37] by the animal, in whose "essence" these two contradictory resolutions must find some enigmatic "unity."[38] Similarly: if on one hand the animal knows nothing about the world, given that "the world is essentially closed to the animal"[39] and the possibility of relating to being as such is moreover "quite fundamentally closed" to it,[40] on the other hand beings are "not disclosed to it [the animal] and for that reason are *not closed off* from it either".[41]

   We will return later to the status of this particular *epoché* of the animal world and of the world of life, which is so clearly linked to the "neither-nor" and "no more-not yet" mentioned above is to be noted. In the meantime, we might ask ourselves: "if by world we understand beings in their respective accessibility in each case,"[42] what sense would it make for Heidegger to dwell in the negative of the animal. Indeed, why 'bestow' on the animal a problem – that of a world is already utterly compromised in an ontological sense, like the accessibility of "the manifestness of beings as such as a whole [*Offenbarkeit von Seiendem als solchem im Ganzen*]"[43] – which seems to simultaneously belong to it and not belong to it, resulting in "the animal [being] separated from man by an abyss"[44]? Furthermore, why elect the concept of world as the "guiding thread" for determining "whether we should talk of a world of the animal"[45] or not?

   In fact, all of Heidegger's ontological determinations of the animal as a living organism are always understood as a privative of the human. This not only applies to the distinction between animal capacities and human possibilities, but is also especially true in the enormous variety of denominations through which Heidegger

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[36] Heidegger (1995, 264).

[37] Heidegger (1995, 199, 210, 269).

[38] Heidegger (1995, 270).

[39] Heidegger (1995, 270).

[40] Heidegger (1995, 274).

[41] Heidegger (1995, 248). Cf. also Heidegger (1982, 190–191 and above all 319): "Since it exists, the Dasein understands being and comports itself toward beings. The distinction between being and beings is there, latent in the Dasein and its existence, even if not in explicit awareness. The distinction is there [i.e. exists]; that is to say, it has the mode of being of the Dasein: it belongs to existence. Existence means, as it were, 'to be in the performance of this distinction.' Only a soul that can make this distinction has the aptitude, going beyond the animal's soul, to become the soul of a human being".

[42] Heidegger (1995, 268).

[43] Heidegger (1995, 353).

[44] Heidegger (1995, 264. Cf. 282).

[45] Heidegger (1995, 264).

attempts to indicate the animal equivalent of what the human is in the world, and in particular, in the environing world (*Umwelt*). The animal is, in fact, in relation to a domain or realm (*Bereich*), a region (*Bezirk*), and an environment (*Umgebung*), which ultimately only is a circumscribed range (*Umkreis*) or area of instinctual activity (*Umtrieb*). This indicates that there is fundamental ontological category of the encircling ring (*Umring*, *Umringung*) or disinhibiting ring (*Enthemmungsring*) within which the animal is captive (*benommen*) – once caught, grasped, attracted, stunned,[46] and even "immured as it were within a fixed sphere [*Rohr*] that is incapable of further expansion or contraction".[47] The "life of the animal is precisely the struggle [*Ringen*] to maintain this encircling ring".[48] Furthermore, "this struggling with the encircling ring which circumscribes the totality of its instinctual activity is an essential character of *life itself* [emphasis added],"[49]just as the essence of captivation (*Benommenheit*, *Benommensein*) is nothing other than "animality" as such.[50] The animal wanders in an openness (*Offenheit*, *Offensein*) towards 'something' that is not yet a manifestness (*Offenbarkeit*) of the world. The animal thus does not relate to the being in its own being – to the something "as" something – and it even becomes difficult to identify that to which it really relates, to the extent that Heidegger ends up simply referring to it as the 'other' (*das Andere*) with which the animal is always already concerned (*angegangen*).

Heidegger is perfectly aware of this difficulty, and even reformulated it in the following terms: if we continue to interpret the world in an ontological sense, as the being of beings to which the animal does not have access, we are forced to interpret the animal (and to determine its animality: *Tierheit*, *Tiersein*, *Tierwesen*) by thinking of it (or rather, seeing and talking about it) "from the part of man [*auf der Seite des Menschen*]". At the same time, if we deny the animal any access to the world, we end up placing it "on the side of the stone [*auf seiten des Steins*]",[51] again abandoning it in a no man's land. The reality of the matter is that an ontology and a metaphysics of life (and of the animal) serve only to allow "our own proper

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[46] It is interesting to note, in this regard, that this term was already used in *Being and Time* in reference to Dasein itself, whose "Being-in-the-world, as taking care of things, *is taken in by* (benommen) the world which it takes care of" (Heidegger 2010, 57), such that "[i]nitially and for the most part, Dasein is taken in by its world" (Heidegger 2010, 107). Yet this being absorbed by the world is not only inauthentic – for "[i]n this familiarity Dasein can lose itself in what it encounters within the world and be numbed by (benommen) it" (Heidegger 2010, 71)–, but, if referring to the experience of the *Angst*, it can also be a prelude to a possible authenticity: "In it [the *Angst*], Dasein is taken back fully to its naked uncanniness and benumbed by it. But this numbness (*Benommenheit*) not only *takes* Dasein back from its *'worldly'* possibilities, but at the same time *gives* it the possibility of an *authentic* potentiality-of-being" (Heidegger 2010, 316).

[47] Heidegger (1995, 198).

[48] Heidegger (1995, 255).

[49] Heidegger (1995, 259).

[50] Heidegger (1995, 259).

[51] Heidegger (1995, 267).

essence"[52] to emerge by contrast, or rather, to remind us of the Dasein that we are and of the animal that we are not – whatever that form of mere living may mean.[53]

As such, ontological discourse holds an inadequate grasp of the intrinsic "nature of animality" and from understanding what the "animal in itself" is, because it "turns away [*wegfragt*] from the animal, as it were, toward that which the animal properly is not."[54] Ontology always speaks by framing the animal "from the human perspective [*vom Menschen her gesehen*],"[55] or rather, "from the perspective of man [*vom Menschen aus gesehen*]"[56] and never "from the perspective of the animal [*vom Tier aus gesprochen*]".[57] Indeed, it is only by overturning this ontological perspective would the sense of the animal's poverty in the world emerge,

> Roughly put, is nonetheless a kind of wealth. The difficulty of the problem lies in the fact that in our questioning we always and inevitably interpret the poverty in world and the peculiar encirclement proper to the animal in such a way that we end up talking as if that which the animal relates to and the manner in which it does so were some being, and as if the relation involved were an ontological relation that is manifest to the animal. The fact that this is not the case forces us to claim that the *essence of life can become accessible only if we consider it in a deconstructive fashion*. But this does not mean that life represents something inferior or some kind of lower level in comparison with human Dasein. On the contrary, life is a domain (*Bereich*) which possess a wealth of openness (*Reichtum des Offenseins*) which the human world may have nothing to compare.[58]

This otherness and wealth of the "animal world" remains closed to us until we speak the language of ontology and metaphysics or look for an "essence". In fact, "[f]rom the perspective of the animal we should never take these other things [*dieses Andere*] as beings, though for us it is only possible to approach such things by way of naming through language. However, linguistic naming, and all language, always exists as an understanding of beings […]".[59] We will see later look towards elucidating what the theme of a language which is no longer the ontological or metaphysical means for the discourse on the animal. Heidegger alludes to this), when he states: "That perhaps only poets occasionally speak of [the animal in itself] is an argument that metaphysics is not allowed to cast to the winds."[60]

Yet, in the 1929–1930 lectures, Heidegger, through an almost shamanic vocabulary, states that there are different ways of transposing (*Versetztsein*) the

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[52] Heidegger (1995, 272).

[53] Derrida (2008). Cf. Heidegger (1995, 276): animality comes into view only "as a realm of beings which are manifest and thus call for a specific fundamental relationship on our part, one in which at least initially we do not move".

[54] Heidegger (1995, 248).

[55] Heidegger (1995, 270).

[56] Heidegger (1995, 271).

[57] Heidegger (1995, 210).

[58] Heidegger (1995, 255).

[59] Heidegger (1995, 259).

[60] Heidegger (1995, 272). Significantly, Heidegger does not cite Novalis, Hölderlin, or Rilke but chooses Saint Paul (Romans 8:19).

human – "into another human being, into animals, into living beings, and into life-less things,"[61] or into the world as totality – and that "[t]he animal realm demands a very specific kind of transposedness from us."[62] However, he also states that the human Dasein is not simply transposed, but rather it "is *intrinsically* [emphasis added] a peculiar transposedness into the encompassing contextual ring of living beings."[63] What this transposedness is and how it gets articulated is not clarified, nor is its potential defined, but the ambivalence inhering in the concept is evident. Indeed, if "living nature holds us captive [*gefangen*] as human beings in a quite specific way", then conversely, the "encircling rings are transposed into one another as a whole". This is what "first constitutes the specific character of the animal realm as a realm, i.e., the way and manner in which it holds sway within the totality of nature and of beings in general" – and it is also precisely what manifests to us as an "*an intrinsically dominant character of living beings amongst beings in general*, an intrinsic elevation [*Erhabenheit*] of nature over itself, a sublimity that is lived in life itself".[64]

In elucidating the Greek word *physis* – which we shall translate as "nature" – as the self-forming prevailing of beings as a whole, Heidegger already renders *physis* as a word that indicates: a way of experiencing, naming, and thinking being. In this way,

> *Physis* means that which is growing, growth, that which has itself grown in such growth. We here take growth and growing, however, in the quite elementary and broad sense in which it irrupts in the primal experience of man: growth not only of plants and animals, their aris-ing and passing away taken merely as an isolated process, but growth as this occurring in the midst of, and permeated by, the changing of the seasons, in the midst of the alternation of day and night, in the midst of the wandering of the stars, of storms and weather and the raging of the elements. Growing is all this taken together as one.[65]

As we will see shortly, Heidegger's new, incessant reconsideration of the word *physis* (detached from the framework of fundamental ontology) will become the basis of some essential changes in his way of conceiving the animal. These changes depend more broadly on Heidegger's profound reconception of the way we experi-ence, name, and think the animal – and represents a new way of intertwining and approaching the belonging-together of these three dimensions.[66]

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[61] Heidegger (1995, 276).

[62] Heidegger (1995, 278).

[63] Heidegger (1995, 278).

[64] Heidegger (1995, 278).

[65] Heidegger (1995, 25).

[66] On this point, cf. Ardovino (2017).

3 From Being to Ereignis, or from Poverty in World to the Gathering of World

At this point, it is necessary to explain the thesis we would like to posit, namely that, after the ontology of animality was sketched out in the 1929–1930 lectures, two basic lines of thought existed in Heidegger's reflection on the animal. The first continues to underdetermine the animal (and life) and continues to appear, almost 20 years later, in texts such as the personal yet exoteric *Letter on Humanism* (1946). The second, which is present in the conferences constituting *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935–1937), finds its best expression in the conference on *The Thing* (1949) and in other neighboring writings. This line of thought makes substantial changes with respect to the first, which we will only be able to outline in this thesis.

To emphasize the difference between these two lines of thought, it may be helpful to briefly re-summarize the first line of thought. Discussing the etymology of the word "being"[67] in his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger observes that the "full variety of the inflections of the verb 'to be' is determined by three different stems", from which "we derive three initial and vividly definite meanings: living, emerging, abiding". These inflections are life ("the living, that which from out of itself and in itself stands and goes and reposes: the self-standing"); growing ("to hold sway, to stand from out of itself and to remain standing"); and dwelling ("to sojourn"). In Greek: *zoe*, *physis*, *ethos*. Here, life and the living, as well as nature in a broad sense and even human behavior and institutions, are still conceived as ways of being, which are linguistically and conceptually subordinated to and reabsorbed in the single, unitary articulation of being.

In the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger likewise states that "with animal, *zoon*, an interpretation of 'life' is already posited that it lies in an interpretation of beings as *zoe* and *physis*, within which what is living appears."[68] He asks himself if we are "really on the right track to the essence of the human being as long as we set him off as one living creature among others in contrast to plants, beasts, and God."[69] His conclusion is consequentially negative. Man is not just one living being among others, nor can he simply be included in the essential realm of *animalitas*, since, as ek-sistence, he can "never be thought of as a specific kind of living creature among others."[70] In fact, Heidegger states that "living creatures are as they are without standing outside their being as such and within the truth of being,"[71] which is a means of reiterating, and not failing to underline, what he had already affirmed in

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[67] Cf. Heidegger (1984, 74–77).

[68] Heidegger (1998, 246).

[69] Heidegger (1998, 246).

[70] Heidegger (1998, 247).

[71] Heidegger (1998, 248).

1929–1930: the ambivalent warning we have already seen regarding the difficulty of thinking about those forms of living from which the Dasein stands distinctly apart.[72]

From this perspective, if the human body is and remains something essentially other than an animal organism, then there seems to be no hope of thinking about the animal, because "even what we attribute to the human being as animalities on the basis of the comparison with 'beasts' is itself grounded in the essence of ek-sistence."[73] The abyss that separates the human and the living (including the animal) is thus reformulated from the perspective of the only existing being (i.e. the human Dasein) in terms of a lack of *aletheia* and *logos*, given that "[l]anguage is the clearing-concealing advent of being itself." Therefore, no living being relates to being, in its truth, through the mediation of language.

With regards to the second line of thought, it should be noted, as already in the above-cited *Introduction to Metaphysics,* where the *physis* and *zoe* are still under the protection of being, Heidegger suggests a way of experimenting, naming, and thinking about the animal that does not adhere to a strictly ontological approach. In fact, when Heidegger comments on Sophocles' *Antigone*, placing it in relation to an earlier interpretation by Parmenides and Heraclitus, he finds himself facing an "originary essential connection between poetic and thoughtful saying, especially when, as here, it is a matter of the inceptive, poetizing-thinking, grounding and founding of the [Greek] historical Dasein".[74] In the first stasimon of *Antigone*, Sophocles

> Names the flock of birds in the air, the animal life in the water, the bull and stallion in the mountains. The living thing, lightly dreaming, whose cycle of life reverberates in itself and in its environs, constantly renews itself, streaming out over itself in ever new forms, and yet it remains in its own single route, it is familiar with the place where it spends the night and roams. As a living thing, it is fitted into the sway of the sea and the earth. Into this life that revolves within itself, its ambit, structure, and ground unfamiliar to them, humans cast their snares and nets; they tear this life away from its own order, enclose it in their paddocks and pens, and force it beneath the yoke. In one arena, breaking forth and breaking up; in the other, capturing and subjugating.[75]

This kind of saying, which is both poetic and thoughtful, is what deeply animates the lectures on *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Although Heidegger still affirms that animals have no world[76] and that they – along with things, human beings, gifts,

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[72] Cf. Heidegger (1998, 248): "Of all the beings that are, presumably the most difficult to think about are living creatures, because on the one hand they are in a certain way most closely akin to us, and on the other they are at the same time separated from our ek-sistent essence by an abyss. However, it might also seem as though the essence of divinity is closer to us than what is so alien in other living creatures, closer, namely, in an essential distance that, however distant, is nonetheless more familiar to our ek-sistent essence than is our scarcely conceivable, abysmal bodily kinship with the beast".

[73] Heidegger (1998, 248).

[74] Heidegger (1984, 176).

[75] Heidegger (1984, 164–165).

[76] Heidegger (2002, 23): "The stone is world-less. Similarly, plants and animals have no world; they belong, rather, to the hidden throng of an environment into which they have been put. The

sacrifices, plants, equipment, and works of art – are nothing but parts of an entity and ways of being, he simultaneously reveals another way of experiencing, naming, and thinking about animals by always mentioning them in relation to a broader scale: the hawk over the wood, the deer in the forest clearing, the beetle in the grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket. In this sense, each animal receives its distinctive shape from the temple work in its natural environment, which in turn is what first gives the things their face. Early on, Heidegger affirms that, "the Greeks called this coming forth and rising up in itself and in all things *physis*. At the same time, *physis* lights up that on which man bases his dwelling. We call this the earth."[77]

Here animals – as well as plants, but also the sea, rocky ground, stone, storm, sun, or the light of day, the bread of the sky, the darkness of night, and the invisible space of the air – are "beings", but they are also experienced, named, and thought of as "things", and more specifically as "things of the earth", which

> Flow together in reciprocal harmony. But this confluence is no blurring of outlines. What flows here is the self-sustaining stream of boundary-setting, a stream which bounds everything that presences into its presence. So in every self-secluding thing there is the same not-knowing-one-another. The earth is the essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means: to bring it into the open as the self-secluding.[78]

The "belonging of the thing to the earth" on one hand provides "an authoritative and deep interpretation of the thingliness of the thing" in general,[79] because it allows us to finally pay attention, in a way that is no longer metaphysical or scientific-objectifying, to the mere "inconspicuous [*unscheinbar*] thing", which withdraws itself from thought and reveals in "this self-contained refusal" the very "essential nature of the thing".[80] On the other hand, to say that the animal is a thing of the earth means that it is not simply world-less or poor in world but that, participating in the essential nature of the earth, it reveals itself "only in its rising up into the world, in the opposition between world and earth."[81] Here, the animal is again inside and outside of the world, in need of the world (understood as "self-opening openness") but also opposed to it (as "historical world"). However, and this is decisive, its condition is no longer called the ontological realm of life or of the living, but rather belongs to the *physis* and to the earth. This does not only mean the abandonment of every trace of biology but also opening a way of thinking that no longer identifies with ontology and metaphysics, which instead are undermined by their constant need to distinguish themselves from (and to oppose) the biological science or a 'philosophy of life'.

It is not until the 1940s, and in particular until the great texts that were dedicated to interpreting the three inceptive thinkers, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and

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peasant woman, by contrast, possesses a world, since she stays in the openness of beings".

[77] Heidegger (2002, 21).

[78] Heidegger (2002, 25).

[79] Heidegger (2002, 43).

[80] Heidegger (2002, 12).

[81] Heidegger (2002, 43). Cf. also Heidegger (1999), passim, and Heidegger (2013, 176).

Parmenides, that we witness the progressive valorization of this belonging (which is neither biological nor metaphysical, because it is pre-metaphysical) and it's critical decoupling from ontology – or rather, its definitive entry into poetic thinking (like the thinking of Ereignis as *Enteignis*) or a "phenomenology of the inapparent-inconspicuous [*Unscheinbare*]."[82] In other words, this shifts into a phenomenology of *Enteignis*, which "in an appropriated manner [*ereignishaft*] takes over the early Greek *lethe* in the sense of concealing [*Verbergen*]"[83] and consequently, the animal *Verbergung* – becoming a phenomenology without ontology.[84]

Before dwelling on the crucial conference on *The Thing*, it is worth remembering that the lectures – and especially those on Heraclitus, who gets taken up again in the essays *Logos* (1951) and *Aletheia* (1954) – are where Heidegger stops contrasting life to being, with living and the living signifying privative modes of being, and instead recognizes *physis* and *zoe* as "fundamental words of inceptive thinking" and proceeds to interpret life "in contradistinction to the concept of life in traditional metaphysics."[85] In short, without fully elaborating on his interpretation, Heidegger presents life (*zoe*) and living (*zen*) as not just modes of being but as ways of rising and setting, of belonging to and re-entering nature (*physis*): as "that rising-up which goes-back-into-itself"[86] and "that going-back-into-itself which rises up."[87] Indeed, "*zoe* and *physis* say the same,"[88] like all the fundamental words of archaic Greek thought and, in a particular way, *aletheia* and *logos*.

The animal, which Heidegger now no longer calls *Tier*, but *Getier* (We will return to this shortly),

> Does belong to *zen* in a special sense. The rising of animals into the open remains closed and sealed in itself in a strangely captivating way. Self-revealing and self-concealing in the animal are one in such a way [*auf eine Art einig*] that human speculation practically runs out of alternatives when it rejects mechanistic views of animality – which are always feasible – as firmly as it avoids anthropomorphic interpretations. Because the animal does not speak, self-revealing and self-concealing, together with their unity [*samt ihrer Einheit*], possess a wholly different life-essence [*Lebe-Wesen*] with animals.

Here, Heidegger apparently seems to be latching on to his first line of thought – that is, to the ontology of the animal as neither/no longer stone, nor/no longer man, which both has and does not have a world, because the world is neither open nor closed for it. Yet, on closer inspection, he is actually saying a lot more. The animal is not at all detached from *aletheia*. Self-revealing and self-concealing are *both* present in it – it is no longer *nec-nec*, but *et-et* – and are part of an enigmatic unity, a mystery that is coming together. The latter certainly escapes the grasp of

[82] Heidegger (2003, 80).

[83] Heidegger (1972, 41).

[84] Cf. Ardovino (2017), and Alvis (2008).

[85] Heidegger (2018, 68).

[86] Heidegger (2000a, 76).

[87] Heidegger (2018, 277).

[88] Heidegger (1975, 117).

biological and philosophical thought, but not because the animal is totally extrinsic to *aletheia*. Rather, Heidegger now interprets *aletheia* as *Geheimnis* of *Lichtung*, or as clearing and lighting whose event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) is the world,[89] or as the fourfold (*Geviert*) of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, which are what is appropriated in the event of appropriation and dispropriation.[90]

In this third, later period of Heidegger's thought after the phenomenology of life and of being, the animal is no longer experienced, named, and thought only through the perspective of the human Dasein but rather from the perspective of Dasein as world – in a language that is no longer dominated by being and the living but by the radiant light of the Ereignis, as *Lichtung*. The animal here is discussed in reference to *physis* (earth and sky) but also (and, in a certain sense, above all) in reference to the divine and vice versa: "[w]hat is named in the Greek *zoon* lies so far from any biologically conceived animality that the Greeks could even call their gods *zoa*."[91]

The animal continues to belong (like water, stones, plants) to and spread out across the earth, which is "the building bearer, what nourishingly fructifies."[92] The animal is thus no longer simply a living thing but, more widely, a "world-thing."[93] This means (and we will return to this point in a moment) that it participates decisively in the mirror-play and tender infinite relations of the four world regions. In this sense, the world now takes upon itself even the key word that, in the 1929–1930 lectures, indicated the animal's poverty in world. Indeed, the aforementioned mirror-play is in fact experienced, named, and thought of as a ring (*Ring*), and even more so, as a recollected circling (*Gering*). In accordance with this circling,

> The thinging itself is slight and the thing that each time abides is nimble, inconspicuously (*unscheinbar*) pliant in its essence. The thing is nimble: jug and bench, footbridge and plow. But a thing is also, after its manner, tree and pond, stream and mountain. Things are, each abiding thing-like in its way, heron and deer, horse and bull. Things are, each abiding thing-like after their manner, mirror and clasp, book and picture, crown and cross.[94]

The animal is neither a living being nor an entity, but rather a thing. It no longer needs either biology or ontology, just as God and faith do not need the thinking of

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[89] Cf. Heidegger (1975, 118).

[90] Cf. Heidegger (1972, 42). If again, in the lecture on Parmenides, Heidegger states that "[t]he animal is excluded from the essential domain of strife between unconcealedness and concealedness" (Heidegger 1992, 159–160), Heidegger now affirms: "whether and to what extent disclosing and lighting [*Entbergung und Lichtung*] are the Same, remain to be asked" (Heidegger 1975, 103). And since *Entbergung* and *Verbergung* are not thought of "as two different occurrences merely jammed together, but as One and the Same [*als Eines und das Selbe*]" (Heidegger 1975, 112–113), the animal, at one time excluded from *aletheia* as truth of being, now reveals a relationship with *Lichtung* that, however distinct from that of men and gods, it is irreducible to mere exclusion. For its part, *Lichtung* is an *aletheia* free from any dualistic (polemical or adversarial) element, because in it the closure is no longer the "counter" (nor the heart nor the background) to the opening, but rather is the highest way of opening, like the *Enteignis* is for the *Ereignis*.

[91] Heidegger (1975, 116).

[92] Heidegger (2012, 16).

[93] Heidegger (1971a, 203).

[94] Heidegger (2012, 20).

being.[95] However, just as God still needs a theology, the animal deserves a thought-ful naming and poetic thinking, as was foreshadowed in 1929–1930 and repeated in the early 1940s during the lectures on Parmenides.[96] If the animal continues 'to not exist', here there is no more "is" nor "lives" but only "things". This means that, far from never relating to the world, the animal is that which, in its own way (in the way in which it is delivered into 'its' own ownership by the Ereignis of world) allows the worlding of the world, i.e. gathers it, appropriates and preserves it in its shining and lighting. If in 1929–1930, lizards and bees were in a sort of non-relationship with stone and sun, now the animal permits the stone and the sun (earth and sky) to endure, portraying itself in them – just as it in turn makes men and gods stand out – as they in their own different ways also transpose themselves within it.

The animal is a world-thing, no longer a "being which has the being of things."[97] It relates to the world without passing through being but rather through an event of appropriation. Here to experience, say, and think, the animal means to attempt a phenomenology without any type of ontology, in which it becomes clear that the "[w]orld is not one way of being and deferential to this. Being has its own essence from the worlding of world […]. When the world first takes place properly, then being, and along with it the nothing, vanish into worlding."[98] *Getier* is a poetic-thoughtful name for the *Tier* that is no longer attributable to the living and the being. Just as the plant is now *Gewächs*, the river and sea *Gewässer*, the stone *Gestein*, the wood *Gehölz*, the mountain *Gebirg*, the star *Gestirn*, and so on, the animal that gath-ers the world – the animal that is experienced, named, and thought within its 'recol-lected' form – is the forgathering (*Versammlung*) that resounds in the *Getier*. Since this "gathering" is none other than the pre-metaphysical sense of the *logos*,[99] the animal is not only a world-thing intrinsic to *aletheia* and *physis* but rather a form and a way of happening of the inceptive *logos,* that is beyond metaphysical being.

Since the naming of *Getier* recovers a language that is neither humanistic nor subiectivistic,[100] but rather refers, from a relational perspective, to the entire Ereignis of world (*physis*), as well as to the divine within it, then the presupposition would be that if the animal does not speak, one might nevertheless think that it says – given that saying (*Sagen*) now means showing (*Zeigen*), and not the self-showing

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[95] Heidegger (1986, 436–437).

[96] Heidegger (1992, 160): "In fact, an original poetizing capacity would be needed to surmise this concealed element that is proper to the living being [*dieses Verborgene des Lebendigen*] [...]".

[97] Heidegger (2002, 4).

[98] Heidegger (2012, 46). On the meaning and textual locations of the vanishing of being and on the ontological difference (Heidegger 2003, 366) in the *Ereignis*, or rather, in the *Lichtung* of the world as fourfold, cf. Ardovino. For the important analyses of the shift from the distinction *Sein/Seiende* to the intersection (*Unter-Schied*) *Welt/Ding*, as well as of reformulation of the *Seiende im Ganzen* as "earth and sky", cf. Harman (2007).

[99] Cf. Heidegger (1975, 59–78).

[100] Heidegger (2013, 1207): "Gewächs und Getier […]. sind nicht in ihrem Wesen abhängig vom Menschen als dem vorstellenden Subjekt. Aber die *Subjektivität* ist ein Wesen des Gewächs und Getier enteignenden Ereignisses, worin ihr Anwesen in einer ausgezeichneten Weise *im Ereignis preisgegeben wird*".

(*Sichselbstzeigen*) of beings in *Being and Time* but showing understood as pointing (by things and animals) towards the Ereignis of the world. This saying, in turn, has no need to be voiced in words (just as the animal does not necessarily need to make vocal sounds to speak), but still sets in motion and paves the way for human speaking, granted that "man is capable of speaking only insofar as he, belonging to Saying [i.e. to the Showing of, and in, Ereignis], listens to Saying, so that in resaying it he may be able to say a word."[101] Not having words and not having speech thus does not equate that the animal is missing something, since within *Geviert legein* (like gathering) and saying (like showing) are no longer conceivable without the animal's being rooted in the earth and without the hint/wave (*Wink*) of the gods between earth and sky.

To show the *Getier* without ceasing to speak, we must therefore speak another language, which is linked to another way of thinking and experiencing. As such, there is much more to be said in this regard, starting from the themes of freedom, breath, and the gaze.[102] However, as we near the conclusion of this rough *excursus* on Heidegger's thought, we will limit ourselves to one final point, which refers back to the study by A. Mitchell (2015)[103] that justly recalls Heidegger's other poetic-thoughtful name for the animal, taken from Georg Trakl: the *Wild*. This term does not simply refer to the wild animal or the beast, but rather to that which dwells in the forest, which belongs to and returns to it, living free and untamed between the edge and the thick of the wood. Dwelling in the brush, the Wild could perhaps be expressed in archaic Italian as "ciò che è inselvato" (that which abides in the wilderness) or, better still, as "ciò che rinselva" (that which turns back to and hides itself into the wild).

Since the *Wild* "names the mortal"[104] in its crepuscular transition (*Dämmerung*), and since, in a text similar to *The Thing*, i.e. *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger

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[101] Heidegger (1971b, 134).

[102] Cf. the considerations from the lecture on Eraclitus referring to the bird, in which swinging, swaying, hovering, and carrying away, there is a true "free measurement of the open", and in whose flying, and singing, there is a "preservation of what is closed, for example in mourning" (Heidegger 2018, 72). Leaving aside the considerations of the *psyche* as the breathing of the *zoon* and as a word indicating, yet again, the *physis*, cf. also the difference between this account and the lectures on Parmenides (Heidegger 1992, 80: "the hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man [...].The hand exists as hand only where there is disclosure and concealment. No animal has a hand", and 107: "Animals do not look [*blicken nicht*] [...] We are always the ones [...] who, on our own, interpret the way animals 'watch' us as a looking. On the other hand, where man only experiences Being and the unconcealed sketchily, the animal's 'look' can concentrate in itself a special power of encounter. Looking, in the original sense of emergent self-presenting" is "determined from *aletheia* [...]") and the *Abendländisches Gespräch* (1946–48), in which the hesitating "shy deer, looking [*blickend*] from the edge of the forest over wide meadows and fields, seems to endure [*auszuhalten*] the world in its waiting silence" (Heidegger 2000b, 61).

[103] Mitchell (2015).

[104] Heidegger (1971b, 167). It is also interesting to remember that Heidegger already mentioned in 1928/29 the idea of a 'twilight' state (*Dämmerzustand*) of early Dasein in order to define the human infant, who is in turn so 'close' to the animal (cf. Heidegger 1996, 125–126). Cf. Mitchell (2011).

even lets slip a reference to the mere perishing (*verenden*) of the *Getier*, we might
suggest that, in Heidegger's late phenomenology, "[m]ortality is not a privilege of
the human"[105] – such that, together with being and difference, all that "mark[s] an
essential, even ontological, distinction from the animal must be surrendered."[106]
After the world, truth, and language, even the theme of death would have called for
a comprehensive reconsideration by Heidegger: a reconsideration adapted to his
different way of experimenting, naming, and thinking about the animal and attentive
to the contrast between and co-belonging of the two recollected forms of world – i.e.
the fourfold (*Geviert*) and the enframing (*Gestell*)[107] – in an age of technology in
which the massification and extermination of the living are intermixed in a global
"sacrifice". This reconsideration of death, however, was never fully laid out. Thus,
we can perhaps say, by way of conclusion, that the courage and audacity that
Heidegger revealed when he took it upon himself to name the horizon of God and
of oblation (*Opfer*) without hesitation, he did not have in relation to the animal, i.e.
of its concealed appearing neither as a plus nor a minus with respect to living things
in the world but rather, quite simply, as an authentic world-thing.

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[105] Mitchell (2015, 114).

[106] Mitchell (2015, 113).

[107] Cf. Ardovino (2011).

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Poetically Man Dies: Heidegger and the Limits of Man in Word and Death

Roberto Redaelli

"On ne meurt qu'une fois, et c'est pour si longtemps!"
(Molière).

Abstract This paper examines the two different modalities of finitude identified by Heidegger, i.e. perishing and dying, respectively attributed to animals and to human beings. The first goal of the paper is to bring to light the structural link in Heideggerian philosophy between death and language, by virtue of which Dasein dies properly only within the symbolic space originated by the word. The second goal is to assess the extent to which the Heideggerian distinction between perishing and dying has held up in the environment of contemporary philosophy: despite some unavoidable limitations, recent scientific outcomes seem provide its validation.

Keywords Language · Death · Thanatology · Animal studies · Anthropology

In tracing a *Sociological History of Dying* in his influential book (Kellehear 2007), Allan Kellehear disengages the scope of his research from the concept that only human beings are aware of their death, a perspective that he rather considers a long-standing anthropocentric prejudice. In the Australian sociologist's reconstruction, this prejudice has ruled undisputed throughout the history of Western literature, upheld by the force of two assumptions. Initially, it was corroborated by the Christian notion that the human being is closer to the angels than to beasts (see Bednarik 2003: 513) and, more recently, replacing divine nature with the ego according to the belief that "only humans know death, because the ego fixes time" (Becker 1972: 28). Countering this deeply rooted prejudice, Kellehear argues that

R. Redaelli (✉)
Institut für Rechtsphilosophie und Allgemeine Staatslehre, University of Nürnberg-Erlangen, Erlangen, Germany
e-mail: roberto.redaelli@fau.de

"every animal understands death" (Kellehear 2007: 11); hence, the dividing line separating the human being from other living beings is merely artificial, false, and by no means justified empirically.

Many years before Kellehear, this boundary was investigated, in purely philosophical terms, by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's reflection on animals stood, and still stands, as a conducive milestone in the cultural and philosophical panorama and has recently been classified as an onto-ethology (see Buchanan 2008). Renowned philosophers, such as Derrida, Agamben, and Lévinas, have appraised it alternately as an object of criticism and as a source of inspiration.

Within this line of inquiry, which distinguishes the animal space from the human one proper in the re-proposition of the *Seinsfrage*, Heidegger attributes an exclusive relationship with death to what he calls the *Dasein*, along the principles of the anthropocentric tradition criticized by Kellehear. To mark out this exclusive rapport, Heidegger, in his masterpiece *Being and Time*, adopts a precise terminological distinction: *Dasein* is attributed to dying (*Sterben*), while the animal is limitedly attributed to perishing (*Verenden*). As we shall examine further, the distinction between *Sterben* and *Verenden* is not a mere terminological problem; rather, it underpins an essential ontological difference.

This paper herein examines these modalities of finitude with a twofold goal. The first purpose is to bring to light the structural link in Heideggerian philosophy between death and language, by virtue of which *Dasein* dies properly only within the symbolic space originated by the word. Heidegger only occasionally focused on this association in his *Denkweg*.[1] The paper's second purpose is to assess the extent to which the Heideggerian distinction has held up in the panorama of contemporary philosophy: despite some unavoidable limitations, we will see that it does seem to enjoy validation by recent scientific results.

1 The State of the Art: The Dying of the Human Being and the Perishing of the Animal Being in the Criticisms by Derrida and Figal

Heidegger's analysis of animals has been criticized as anthropocentric from different points of view. Heidegger's strong interest in *Dasein* and its unique essence, i.e., existence, and his application of an oppositional logic system have commonly been considered as the evidence of a strong anthropocentric-metaphysical impulse (see Derrida 1987; MacIntyre 1999) underlying his whole philosophical project. Thus, the differentiation between the dying attributed to *Dasein* and the perishing attributed to animals is among the outcomes of such an approach, a differentiation that

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[1] The notion of death in Heidegger is the subject of a rich and extensive academic literature: noteworthy are Ebeling (1967) and the very recent Winkler (2018). On the link between death and words, Oberst (2009) defines this relationship as "intrinsic connection in Human Existence".

his critics argue was formulated with no reference to the empirical sphere and which thus is not substantiated by any scientific data (see Derrida 1987: 174).

One of the more recent criticisms of anthropocentrism made of Heidegger's philosophical structure, specifically concerning the distinction drawn between dying and perishing, is that argued by Matthew Calarco in his book *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (Calarco 2008), which was remarkably well received among animal studies specialists. Calarco proposed attributing to the animal a unique space of its own, by which it need not be introjected, that is, absorbed, within the anthropic perspective: animals are not mere objects of man's thoughts and actions. For the purpose of developing a new perspective on the non-human being enfranchised from the obsolete shackles of anthropocentrism, Calarco revises some of the paradigmatic interpretations of the continental philosophical tradition regarding animals and the whole "*question of the animal*" (Calarco 2008: 4), assessing their merits and shortcomings.

This certainly informative analysis begins with a long chapter on Heidegger significantly titled *Metaphysical Anthropocentrism: Heidegger*. As the title suggests, the outline that Calarco traces of the philosopher in these dense first pages is one of a thinker who "has served primarily to marginalize the animal question in contemporary thought" (Calarco 2008: 15) by fault of a radical kind of anthropocentrism. Such anthropocentrism indeed also informs Heidegger's perspective on the unique feature of the human being that we wish to inquire about in this paper – the modality of finitude inherent to humans – and thus threatens his very reliability on the subject. Therefore, it is opportune that we weight Calarco's criticism of the Heideggerian philosophical structure before re-proposing, if viable, some of its points.

As evidence of the metaphysical anthropocentrism underlying the Heideggerian discourse, Calarco points to the near total absence of any references to animals in the philosopher's project of existential analytics presented in *Being and Time*. Indeed, in the Heideggerian *magnum opus,* only twice are animals a subject of any relevance to the philosophical discourse: once when animal hides are mentioned and a second time when Heidegger traces the abovementioned distinction between the two modes of ending.

Concerning the first of these two 'zoophanies' – if we may call them so – Heidegger recognizes the handiness (*Zuhandenheit*) of animals and their hides in the process of leather shoe manufacturing, nonetheless without reducing the non-human being to the status of an artefact: animals "produce themselves" (Heidegger 1996: 66), and they are not mere products of human beings. Calarco offers two interpretations of this short discussion on animals: on the one hand, recognizing in Heidegger the merit of having uplifted animals from the status of mere instruments made available to mankind; and on the other hand, criticizing the philosopher for not having any further developed this conducive intuition in his existential analytic (see Calarco 2008: 16).

Following this short mention, animals are discussed in a second place in Heidegger's masterpiece. In his attempt to resolve the question of the primordial totality of *Dasein*, Heidegger develops an extensive discussion on being-toward-death. According to Calarco's critique, in the *meditatio mortis* developed in *Being*

and Time, Heidegger proceeds along a binary logic that places animals in a privative opposition to *Dasein*: only *Dasein* dies, while the animal perishes. As noted above, the choices of terminology respond to a precise ontological distinction: the animal simply perishes, but differently, the *Dasein* establishes a relation with death as death and has a kind of access to death.

The underlying purpose of such a distinction is evident: Heidegger wants to distinguish death from simple perishing, i.e., from the ending (*Ende*) conventional for any living being, because ultimately his goal is to attribute dying proper – *Sterben* – only to *Dasein*. For this reason, in *Being and Time*, death is linked not so much to the biological fate of *Dasein*, which it shares with the rest of the organic kingdom and from which it is not exempt, but rather to what we might call the assuming of one's own finiteness, which Heidegger considers the foundation of authentic existence.

In *Zoographies,* Calarco synthesizes such a distinction between perishing and dying and criticizes it as dogmatic and lacking scientific validity. Corroborating his critique, the author quotes in his footnotes the extensive analysis by J. Derrida of the difference between the dying of *Dasein* and the perishing of the animal. The discourse developed by Calarco in *Zoographies* is heavily informed, at times overtly and at times silently, by Derridean critique: we should examine the latter carefully because, if these objections do indeed frustrate Heidegger's distinction between dying and perishing, then the whole structure of the existential analytic collapses in what Calarco rightly calls metaphysical anthropocentrism, by which "the animal's Being is determined in strict binary opposition to and against the measure of the Being of the human" (Calarco 2008: 53). Indeed, Derrida himself is fully aware that, by discrediting the rigorous distinction between dying and perishing, "the entire project of the analysis of *Dasein,* in its essential conceptuality, would be, if not discredited, granted another status than the one generally attributed to it" (Derrida 1993: 31–32).

Most of Derrida's objections to the notion of being-toward-death are collated in *Dying, Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth"*. In this work, Derrida's precise and relentless arguments attack Heidegger's discussion of death as it is traced mostly, but not exclusively, in *Being and Time*. Heidegger's inquiry into the notion of death begins from one of perishing. As noted above, ending, intended as the end of the living, is common to the entire organic kingdom, including *Dasein*. However, the ending cannot be identified, in Heidegger's view as death in its authentic sense: the end of *Dasein*, its biological end, is not its dying.

Having excluded the coincidence between dying and perishing, Heidegger, in order to define the notion of death more clearly, introduces between the two terms the concept of demise (*Ableben*) to indicate the exclusively medical-legal aspect that the end of *Dasein* can assume. However, even in this case, what has been said of perishing remains valid: if *Dasein* can be said to decease only "when it is declared dead after its so-called biological or physiological death has been certified according to conventionally accredited criteria" (Derrida 1993: 37–38), then this kind of death is not dying properly, which is the truly the scope of the Heideggerian philosophical inquiry.

By the end of this inquiry, proceeding from perishing (*Verenden*), to demising (*Ableben*) and reaching the discussion of dying (*Sterben*), death is expounded in its most intimate essence: the term, idiom, or epithet that, in *Being and Time,* is used to "let the term *dying* stand for the *way of being* in which Da-sein *is toward* its death" (Heidegger 1996: 229). Biologically, *Dasein* ends like all other living beings, and it can decease, whereas its end has been certified, but on the existential level, it relates to its death, it is towards its death, by means of what the philosopher calls the anticipation of death (*Vorlaufen zum Tode*). This anticipation of death, this "advancing" (Demske 1970: 31), is the means by which *Dasein* achieves the possibility of relating itself to its most proper potentiality of being (*Seinkönnen*) as Care (*Sorge*), i.e., as temporality. *Dasein* decides itself towards its own death: it becomes aware of the weight of its own finiteness for which death *as possibility* is an impending "*imminence*" (Heidegger 1996: 232).

Of these thanatological designations developed by Heidegger, Derrida first highlights their ontological character: the terminological distinctions among dying, demising, and perishing reveal the abyss separating man from animal. Derrida rightly points out that such an abyssal separation between the mortal and the animal breaks out from "a certain access to death *as* death, to death *as such*" (Derrida 1993: 36). In fact, throughout his philosophical itinerary, Heidegger makes a number of remarks, albeit differently modulated on account of the much-debated 'Turn' (*Die Kehre*) in his philosophy (see Demske 1970) concerning this unique access of *Dasein* to death *as such* and more generally to the *as such*, as opposed to the animal's inability to die. Thus, Heidegger establishes a difference between man and animal that is not of degree but of essence. In Heidegger's view, human beings and animals cannot be related within the sphere of a gradualist and continuist ontology of the living (openly criticized in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*); rather, they are separated by a chasm, a leap, an unbridgeable gap. This difference in essence clearly stands out in the essay *The Thing*, in which the philosopher states that "the mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it" (Heidegger 2001: 176).

Precisely *human* beings' access to death as death, their having death ahead and behind them, is what Derrida objects to in Heidegger's treatment of the ending. Specifically, he criticizes the definition of death that Heidegger elaborates in *Being and Time*, according to which death is "*the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general*" (Heidegger 1996: 242). In Heidegger's view, *Dasein* is being-possible,[2] and death is its most proper possibility,[3] i.e., death is no-longer-being-there: dying is the possibility of the impossibility of existence and of the existent – it is the

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[2] We must consider that, in Heidegger's view "Da-sein is not something objectively present which then has as an addition the ability to do something, but is rather primarily being-possible. Da-sein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility" (Heidegger 1996:134).

[3] A critique of the Heideggerian definition of death as possibility appears in: Lévinas (1982, pp. 104 ff.), Sartre (1969, pp. 589 ff).

negation of all possibilities. Conversely, as a result of this unique nature, death, disclosed by anticipation, allows the possibilities to be seized authentically, showing them as such as possibilities, and thus delivers them to *Dasein*. Thus, death takes the form of "metapossibility" (Fabris 2005: 151).

Now, gaining access to this kind of possibility, in as much as it is an impossibility, is received by Derrida as problematic to say the least – indeed, aporetic in its terminology. The philosopher observes that, by this definition, the possibility of death is revealed *as* impossibility; thus, he raises the question of "how a (most proper) possibility *as* impossibility can still appear *as such* without immediately disappearing, without the '*as such*' already sinking beforehand" (Derrida 1993: 71).

For the sake of clarity, the problem is as follows: in criticizing the definition of death provided in *Being and Time*, Derrida is confronting Heidegger with the objection that death is never experienced as such, i.e., one never faces death as such: its very manifestation as such is its dissolution as such. In fact, "the death is the disappearance, the end, the annihilation of the *such as*, of the possibility of the relation to the phenomenon *as such* or the phenomenon of the *as such*" (Derrida 1993: 75). By demonstrating the impossibility of experiencing death as death, which thus dissolves as such, Derrida means to stifle the distinction between *Dasein*, which Heidegger believes capable of accessing its own finitude, and other living beings, which he excludes from this kind of contact. Having removed both from the possibility of accessing the *as such* and specifically accessing death as death, animals and humans are ultimately placed at the same existential level, thus united by the impossibility of dying proper. This critique calls for a closer reflection.

A lucid analysis of the controversy between these two philosophers is offered by C. Di Martino, who addresses one primary observation: Derrida's objection is liable to place in crisis the Heideggerian concept of death only if death is considered "as a given in need of being subject to phenomenological appropriation and if the experience of death […] is considered as a rapport and encounter (an impossible one, indeed) with it" (Di Martino 2002: 114). In other words, the Derridean criticism of Heidegger's conclusions on the possibility of experiencing death as death is successful only if the latter intended death as a given, a phenomenon in fact, which *Dasein* can experience, i.e., which humans can encounter in their existence. However, Heidegger himself seems to have refused the possibility of experiencing one's own death.

In his reflection on the possibility of experiencing the death of others, Heidegger in fact argued peremptorily that "the transition to no-longer-being-there lifts Da-sein right out of the possibility of experiencing this transition and of understanding it as something experienced. This kind of thing is denied to actual Da-sein in relation to itself" (Heidegger 1996: 221). Thus, Heidegger himself admits the impossibility of experiencing death as death, whereas we think and speak of death in terms of given. This way of intending death is evidently not what the author of *Being and Time* refers to when he argues that human beings can, in some way, relate to death as death and can relate to their own finitude.

From this perspective, the most accurate reading might not be the one of Derrida but rather that of another meticulous critic of Heidegger: Günter Figal. In his

Phenomenology of Freedom (Figal 1991), Figal criticizes the notion of anticipation of death[4] and polemically traces the *meditatio mortis* in *Being and Time* back to the position of Epicurus:

> When we come to the conclusion that death is "not-being-there", then the position defended by Epicurus is valid, according to which, when we are there, there isn't death, and when there is death, we are not there. Death doesn't let itself be experienced, since it consists precisely in the absence of perception and […] it is moreover the negation of the possibility of conceiving and understanding (Figal 1991: 222).

As we have already expounded, for Heidegger, the transition from life to death shuns any possibility of experience. Along with the same discourse that Epicurus develops in his *Letter to Menoeceus*, Heidegger seems to argue that, if there is life, then there is not death, and if there is death, then there is not life. Thus, any immediate experience of death is precluded to the human being.

Now, if Figal's interpretation of the Heideggerian analysis of death were correct, it would evidently frustrate the objections of Derrida: for Heidegger, the human being does not experience death as death. Nevertheless, on the other hand, Heidegger's statements concerning a rapport with *death as death*, such as in *The Thing*, seem to elude the objections – here only summarized for sake of conciseness – advanced by Figal against the notion of anticipation of death. According to these criticisms, *Dasein* cannot anticipate death because it has no experience of death. For this reason, the Heideggerian discourse on death, in Figal's view, misses the mark. However, Heidegger could, *ideally*, respond to this latter interpretation with argumentation that accepts the possibility for the human being to access death as death, but doing so would unavoidably draw us back to the aporetic situation identified by Derrida.

The discussion developed up to this point should indicate the paramount question exposed by the criticism of Derrida and Figal regarding Heidegger's reconsideration of the anthropological distinction. On the one hand, Derrida's critique does not undermine the Heideggerian distinction between dying and perishing and between human and animal because, for Heidegger, we have no living experience of death; symmetrically, on the other hand, Figal's critique does not affect Heidegger because he argues that we have a rapport with death as death and, in a certain sense – one in need of clarification – we can anticipate it. Therefore, our inquiry must address this question: in what sense does the human being have access to death, if by this phrase we do not intend an experience of death as a phenomenon?

This question indeed is the Gordian knot in need of cutting that stands before our understanding of the Heideggerian position on animals and its difference from *Dasein*. This is the crucial point on which the objections moved to Heidegger from different perspectives by Derrida and by Figal, converge and cross, bringing to light

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[4] The underlying rationale of Figal's analysis of the Heideggerian notion of death is expressed as follows: "We can rightly refute that the *meditatio mortis*, more elaborately developed by Heidegger, leads to what he actually meant to demonstrate. Heidegger's goal was to manifest how the comprehension of being imminent and undetermined must be understood as an anticipation of death" (Figal 1991: 222).

a sort of contradiction, a short-circuit, in the Heideggerian conceptual warp: human beings cannot experience death as death, but they have access to death as death. The problem that is taking shape is thus one concerning what kind of access to death is proper for human beings.

2   Poetry and Death: The Dwelling Proper to Man

A possible solution to this problem is suggested by Heidegger in his works subsequent to the Turning. This solution involves the question of language, which we must thus expound here. Heidegger's position on language changes after *Being and Time*. In his 1927 work, language is "a level superposing the one of meaning and significance opened in the understanding-interpretation" (Di Martino 2005: 22); following the *Kehre*, words take on a disclosing and grounding function,[5] with reference to nominative action, of calling by name.

Heidegger reaches this new perspective on language after his encounter and confrontation with poetry and specifically with the poetry of Hölderlin, whose figure powerfully stands out in Heideggerian thought and plays a major part within the question of Being. More precisely, the Turn brings on a pivotal shift from an unpoetical conception of language, i.e., declarative, assertive, typical of the metaphysical tradition, to a poetical concept, or rather a poietic, creative one, insisting on the grounding, disclosing, aspect of naming – a perspective that throws a bridge across to poetry.[6] This grounding, disclosing character reckoned by Heidegger is first manifest in the ancient Greek noun *poiesis,* from which the word *poetry* derives and which, in our philosopher, does not take on the aesthetic value with which it is normally attributed but rather the original meaning of "fabrication" or "producing" (*hervor-bringen*) (see Galimberti 2006: 619).

Heidegger introduces this conception of poetry in his essay *The Origin of the Work of Art,* where he addresses its openness and the revelation of the beings as beings operated by poetic language and by naming: "Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates beings *to their being from out of* their being. […] Language itself is poetry in the essential sense" (Heidegger 2001: 71–72).

Balancing the ambivalence of the German word *Dichten*, which can mean both 'making poetry' and 'creating' (see Vattimo 1989: 124), in this essay, Heidegger expounds the exquisitely poetical essence of language. Language is poetry (*Dichtung*) in the sense of revealing, bringing to light the being of beings. From this perspective, words ground a world, and on account of the revelations of the beings

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[5] On this point, Hofstadter (2001: XII) recognizes that "in *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935–36) Heidegger had already pointed to the function of poetry as the founding of truth: bestowing, grounding, beginning".

[6] The shift that Heidegger made from an un-poetical to a poetical conception of language is expounded in detail by Di Martino (2005: 72).

operated by language, Heidegger argues that all forms of art constitute a unique kind of poetry in the primeval sense of *poiesis*. All art is, in essence, *Dichtung*, not merely as the art of words, which Heidegger calls *Poesie*, but rather in the original meaning of producing, of creating.[7]

The Origin of the Work of Art is merely an introduction to the discourse on language, which was later more fully articulated in the essay on *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry*. In this latter work, language is explained as the privileged place where truth and being take place; the unique disclosing and grounding characteristic that *The Origin of the Work of Art* had attributed to artistic creation overall, in this latter book, is ascribed limitedly to language. Now, what solely language can reveal is still the world and thus the beings as beings, i.e., the "as such" that is associated with beings. In this specific sense, Heidegger can aphoristically declare that "only where there is language, is there world" (Heidegger 2000: 56).

It is this kind of language, capable of bringing to light the world, which we must now examine carefully and attempt to understand in its specific nature. First, Heidegger excludes, in various instances, that language has a merely instrumental and communicative function[8]; rather, it is the very mode by which *Dasein* can relate to beings. Contrary to the interpretation of metaphysics, language is not something added to the animalness of the human being; rather, it is coexistensive to the humans' existence and mode of being, i.e., to our being open to the manifestness of being (see Di Martino 2002: 104; Sini 1982: 30–47). In this sense, language is the disclosing and understanding mode by which man relates to the world and allows beings to be as such. On account of this unique feature, language is, in essence, a way of showing: "'To say', related to the Old Norse '*saga*', means to show: to make appear, set free, that is, to offer and extend what we call World, lighting and concealing it" (Heidegger 1982: 93).

This way of showing is proper to primordial language, to the saying, which mustn't be identified with the simple phonetic scope of the word, but rather it surpasses it. In fact language, as *Sage*, i.e., in its function of showing, establishes the very foundation of the phonetic discourse, and still, verbal language does not encompass the saying because, as Galimberti rightly observes, "every enunciation of the *Aus-sage* is a declaration, similarly to the primordial discourse, but it does not resolve it, so every discourse (*Aussage*) on language (*Sage*) is always a discourse *from* language (*Aus-sage*) within language; but language is discourse" (Galimberti 2006: 636). On account of this unique relationship between the *Aussage* and the *Sage*, Heidegger states, only seemingly paradoxically, that "*language* speaks" (*Die Sprache spricht*) (Heidegger 1982: 124). This statement means that the linguistic dimension cannot be reduced to a mere communicative system of signs, a vector for

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[7] In this sense Vattimo rightly remarks that "in as much as the work of art constitutes a disclosure or a project in need of being *gedichtet*, invented, then the essence of every art-form is *Dichtung*, poetry" (Vattimo 1989: 124).

[8] Concerning the nature of language, in *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry*, Heidegger states that "Language is not a tool at man's disposal, but that primal event which disposes of the highest possibility of man's being" (Heidegger 2000, 56).

meaning; rather, it is the "means" by which human beings dwell within the world, the mode by which they encounter other beings: it is the sphere within which they are originally immersed. Only and exclusively within this kind of disclosure, the human being uses words in the sense of a communication tool.

Given the brief reflection developed above, we may observe that Heidegger attributes the primordial saying with the capacity to disclose a world because the mode in which it speaks is not – as we have concluded – merely significance but rather indicating and showing. From this new perspective, the word does not merely convey a meaning that is previously revealed by understanding, as had been postulated in *Being and Time*, but rather, it stands as that which indicates and bestows being upon the thing: "Where the word is missing, there is no thing. It is only the word at our disposal which endows the thing with Being" (Heidegger 1982: 141).

Now, on the grounds of this new function that Heidegger attributes to language, we may understand more clearly one crucial element in the solution of the problem of the notion of death in *Being and Time* reckoned by Figal and Derrida. In the 1927 book, there is no reference to a relationship between death and language, and the proposition of a kind of access to death as death remains somewhat interrupted. Only when Heidegger shifted from an assertory conception of language to a poetic one can we begin to notice in his works statements concerning the structural relationship between language and death. In … *Poetically Man Dwells…,* Heidegger writes, "Man exists as a mortal. He is called mortal because he can die. To be able to die means: to be capable of death as death. Only man dies—and indeed continually, so long as he stays on this earth, so long as he dwells. His dwelling, however, rests in the poetic" (Heidegger 2001: 219).

Man recognizes himself in his mortal form, as a finite being, only within the disclosure of the world offered to him by language as *Dichtung*, poetry. In *Being and Time,* any experience of death, as a given that might be encountered, is precluded to *Dasein*, but in the philosophy subsequent to the Turn, it becomes clear to Heidegger that "mortals are they who can experience death as death" (Heidegger 1982: 107), i.e., they can understand and anticipate it precisely because they dwell, in the Latin sense of *morantur*, within language. The poetical dwelling of human beings in this world has its counterpart in their poetical dying: paraphrasing Heidegger, we may say that only *man poetically dies*, but the animal perishes.

Now, even employing the linguistic sphere to explain human access to death as death Heidegger has not yet fully resolved the problem at the heart of the critiques of Figal and Derrida: how can words render death accessible and the 'as such' overall? How can language disclose a world? How can we conceive of the grounding of a world by means of language? And again, if every experience – paramount among them, death – is possible to man within language, by which he may access the being of the beings and his own, i.e., his own mortality, the ensuing question then is this: what action does the word perform to carry out this paramount revealing function?

In a Heideggerian reflection on language, we may find an answer, albeit partial, to this question in the essay *Language*, where the philosopher examines the question of naming in comparison to the poetic words of Georg Trakl. In this work, Heidegger argues:

> This naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls. However this bringing closer does not fetch what is called only in order to set it down in closest proximity to what is present, to find a place for it there. The call does indeed call. Thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness. But the call, in calling it here, has already called out to what it calls. Where to? Into the distance, in which what is called remains, still absent. The calling here calls into a nearness. But even so, the call does not wrest what it calls away from the remoteness, in which it is kept by the calling there. The calling calls into itself and therefore always here and there—here into presence, there into absence. Heidegger 2001: 196)

In other words, in the Heideggerian perspective here outlined, naming brings close what dwells afar without nonetheless revoking its absence. Bringing forth what is distant should not be understood as shifting the thing named by the word to immediate presence into the physical being-present: the distance remains. On this point, Heidegger proposes the examples of *snowfall* and *tolling of vesper bells*, which are mentioned in a poem by Trakl; therefore, Heidegger remarks, "they are present in the call. Yet they in no way fall among the things present here and now in this lecture hall. Which presence is higher, that of these present things or the presence of what is called?" (Heidegger 2001: 196).

In this process proper to word, by which calling brings close and yet maintains the absence of what is called, we can recognize the word's evocative and archetypal power of calling forth and pointing out. The word calls things to presence yet without confining them to their mere presence, thus allowing them to be called again, time after time: the word is a sign – it is what stands in the place of. The word is a sign, and it signals, it indicates. However, we should specify that, in Heidegger's thought, the sign is not a mere tool, an instrument of designation (see Sini 1982: 32–33). The word Heidegger refers to is not the word of science or of metaphysical tradition, i.e., the word that objectifies the being of the beings, reducing being to the beings: rather, it is the word that, in each instance, allows the being of the beings to manifest itself. In fact, Heidegger adds, "the naming call bids things to come into such an arrival. Bidding is inviting. It invites things in so that they may bear upon men as things" (Heidegger 2001: 197).

In the Heideggerian conception of language, the word is an invitation – it is that which renders manifest, by *indicating,* by *pointing to.*[9] In this precise sense, naming calls things in their essence, and as such, it opens a world, which Heidegger, in a

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[9] On these premises, Heidegger can declare that man is a sign because he points out, he indicates others from himself: "As we are drawing toward what withdraws, we ourselves are pointers pointing toward it. We are who we are by pointing in that direction not like an incidental adjunct but as follows: this "drawing toward" is in itself an essential and therefore constant pointing toward what withdraws. To say "drawing toward" is to say "pointing toward what withdraws". To the extent that man *is* drawing that way, he *points* toward what withdraws. *As* he is pointing that way, man *is* the pointer. Man here is not first of all man, and then also occasionally someone who points. No: drawn into what withdraws, drawing toward it and thus pointing into the withdrawal, man first *is* man. His essential nature lies in being such a pointer. Something, which in itself, by its essential nature, is pointing, we call a sign. As he draws to ward what withdraws, man is a sign. (Heidegger 1968: 9).

notorious passage, refers to as a fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and divinities (see Heidegger 2001). Within this fourfold, calling indeed – or, better said, poetry "for the very reason that language is language originally within it" – stands, according to a precise definition of Ugazio, as "primigenal experience of the world, that which is implied by every other mode of approaching things" (Ugazio 1976: 182). We can thus state that Man has a primigenial experience of the world precisely in language, which discloses every other rapport to things. Even underlying Heidegger's definition of being as fourfold, there is the original poeticalness of language that moreover provides man with access to his own finitude. However, we should nevertheless ask: how does the word make death accessible?

Following Heidegger's perspective, the word "death" points us to death; it calls death to presence, yet leaves it absent. We can experience death, in the sense of a unique experience of absence, and we live in "a transit of truth" (see Sini 2006) in which death lies before us: death stands before us in its sign vestige. We can experience that to which this sign points, even emotionally – even without the presence of death as a phenomenon – which is indeed impossible. In this sense, it is correct to argue that the Heideggerian discourse is Epicurean, but, at the same time, it cannot be merely inscribed within the *Letter to Menoeceus*: we access death by means of the sign, the word, in its calling forth, its pointing to. This calling forth concerns that of presence and absence, which in turn – ultimately – involve the event as the final point of this Heideggerian discourse. Only the word can face us with death without it obstructing our comprehension and perception of it.

Now, in Heidegger's view, this access to death is precluded to animals. The non-human being has no world, no word, and no death. More precisely, animals, lacking language, cannot know of death because they are enclosed – according to the philosopher – within the environmental boundary that conveys to them only what is present. Animals do not inhabit distances; they do not have a world at a distance. They are fastened to their instincts, "captive"[10] and poor in world – in want of any protension towards the future – states Heidegger in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. It ensues that animals do not know of death (see Heidegger 1995: 267); thus, they lack the possibility of foreknowing it and orienting their life on the grounds of this knowledge, which – in Heidegger's interpretation – is exquisitely anthropological. In the Heideggerian perspective, animals do suffer and fear (see Heidegger 1995: 271; Di Martino 2002), but death does not impend over them constantly as a certain and unconditional possibility.

The Heideggerian analysis of death here outlined must undergo the scrutiny of scientific validity to assess whether it is the product of a mere anthropocentric prejudice, as Calarco sees it, or whether it enjoys any ontological legitimacy that could contribute, to some degree, to clarifying the difference, if any, between man and animal relative to their ending.

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[10] From the Heideggerian perspective the "*captivation is the essence of animality means: The animal as such does not stand within a manifestness of beings. Neither its so-called environment nor the animal itself are manifest as beings*" (Heidegger 1995: 248).

Before we proceed with this verification, we must understand the stakes of our undertaking. Referencing science and its type of knowledge is implied by the enquiry Heidegger himself sets forth: by no means is it an appended or secondary process. Although for Heidegger, "the existential interpretation of death is prior to any biology and ontology of life. But it also is the foundation for any biographico-historical or ethnologico-psychological inquiry into death" (Heidegger 1996: 229); yet, it is by all means legitimate – and indeed necessary – to assess the validity of this interpretation by employing the very same inquiry that it supports. In other words, if the foundational value that Heidegger attributes to the analysis of death is true, then the ethno-psychological and biological thanatological research should, in principle, corroborate the existential interpretation to which Heidegger is appealing to, or else the whole distinction between perishing and dying is bound to remain arguable.

3   Philosophy and Sciences: The Question of Death

What emerges from the examination of Heideggerian analysis on death is a symbolic relationship of man with his own ending. Man knows of his own death and constantly relates to it, differently than non-human animals that simply perish. The knowledge of death becomes knowledge of man as mortal. In the face of his finitude, man can flee or anticipate it, surmising his own being finite, his own being-possible, among which possibilities is that of not-being any longer. As we have discussed, in Heideggerian philosophy, man experiences this possibility of impossibility within a linguistic disclosure, according to a process of presence and absence.

The unique relationship binding man with his own death is testified as early, as in the behaviour of primordial human beings. A. Leroi-Gouhran, in *Gesture and Speech* (1993), discusses the funerary rites evidenced in prehistoric cultures, inhumation being paramount, and points to the fact that such ritual actions are among the earliest manifestations of a symbolic mind[11] capable of linking – by no mere coincidence – death to art, cult, word, i.e., to that kind of language that is originally

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[11] Leroi-Gourhan explains the link between the capacity to symbolize and death, in its religious scope, in these terms: "The reflective intelligence which not only grasps the relationship between different phenomena but is capable of externalizing a symbolic representation of that relationship was the ultimate acquisition of the vertebrates. […] Where this acquisition takes the form of technicity, the faculties of reflection and the neurovegetative organization of the association areas of the cortex merge into one; where it is a matter of "gratuitous" intellectual operations, the gradual development of the frontal and prefrontal areas appears to have entailed a progressively growing faculty for symbolization. Archaeological evidence of such activity-which goes beyond technical motor function-is elusive for the early Quaternary, but by the Palaeoanthropian stage some archaeological evidence begins to become available. These activities, the earliest of an aesthetic or religious character, can be classified in two groups as reactions to death and reactions to shapes of an unusual or unexpected kind" (Leroi-Gourhan 1993: 107).

nothing but a pointing to, as expressed in Heideggerian terms. In such rites and in the earliest forms of art, we must recognize the *signs* of the relationship established by human beings with their own mortality since the time of their earliest appearance on this Earth. Accepting thus that the capacity of symbolically relating to death is evidenced in man since his earliest traceable emergence, we now must verify the relationship linking animals and death.

We should set about beginning from the evidence produced in recent research that seems to demonstrate how animals do have a degree of awareness of their own death. To this point Kellehear's precious book – from which this paper's inquiry began – collates a series of studies that overall argue in favour of this kind of awareness. The survey takes into consideration not only primates but also elephants, fish, and a variety of other animal species, and it evidences the capacity of a number of non-human beings to experience grief for the loss of their kin. As a case in point among those quoted by Kellehear, the ethologist Eugene Marais, in *The Soul of the Ape* (Marais 1973), presents the case of a mother chacma baboon that recognizes the death of her infant and expresses grief by emitting affectionate gibbers and by touching the corpse with her paws and lips. Another case in point is the research of ethologist Cynthia Jane Moss (1988), which proves that elephants cover the corpses of their kin with tree fronds: carrying out a sort of basic burial rite. Kellehear collates, albeit synthetically, the results from a broad group of studies on animal dying, as well as on the escape strategies that different species adopt when faced with danger, coming to the conclusion that "from elephants, horses and primates to fish, snakes and insects, the awareness of death as a source of fear, grief, defense, attack and release has been observed or demonstrated" (Kellehear 2007: 14).

Now, we must add two observations to Kellehear's conclusions in order to clarify the controversial question of animal perishing. First, Kellehear's goal is to demonstrate that animals are aware of death; thus, the interpretation that he offers of the collated research seems biased towards his thesis according, to which animals understand death. Specifically, with reference to the examples noted above, in the case of Marais' mother chacma baboon, Kellehear remarks that "after recognizing that the infant is dead, she loses interest in the body, even when the deceased is removed from the cage" (Kellehear 2007: 12). Kellehear considers this point marginal to his reading, but on the contrary, Tattersall (1998) sees in it the deep rift between man and animal: only human beings display a strong interest towards their dead and death. Such interest, according to the English anthropologist, is what makes our species unique.

Likewise, regarding the case of the elephant studies by Moss, Kellehear misses considering the analyses contrary to the hypothesis of a form of burial among this species and concludes that "only the fact that we are talking about elephants stops some commentators short of interpreting this as elephants burying one of their own" (Kellehear 2007: 13). However, a 2006 study of elephants by McComb, Baker, and Moss treads cautiously in presenting the peculiar behaviour of these animals as burial actions and concludes by observing that "the evolutionary basis for exhibiting

such intense interest in the decomposed remains of con-specifics in a non-human mammal remains unclear. While the behaviors described here obviously differ fundamentally from the attention and ritual that surround death in humans, they are unusual and noteworthy" (McComb et al. 2006).

A second and more important observation regarding Kellehear's interpretation ensues and is linked to this first one. Concluding the short paragraph on *Animal Awareness of Death*, the author discusses the unique relationship that human beings have towards their own death and states that:

> Our higher language, cognitive and technological development may set use aside from our animal peers (Bingham 1999) but a simple awareness of mortality is not responsible for our uniqueness. The mortal challenge for humans in our early history does not derive from a widespread animal recognition of the facts of death but rather the anticipation of death's arrival and reflection on its possible meanings, or even more, entertaining the possibility that death might have meaning at all. […] A basic prerequisite of the process I call dying is a sentient being capable of an awareness. As I have shown, most animals are capable of this foundational awareness. But built upon this recognition must be a further propensity to reflect on one's personal approach to death – to understand that you are on some vector inevitably propelled towards death. This most basic of all understanding of dying permits all of us to occasionally view ourselves as 'dying people'. We cannot know for sure how many other animals have this ability but we have abundant evidence that we, as humans, surely do (Kellehear 2007: 15).

The key point in this argument is that, for as much as it is possible to attribute to animals the awareness of dying, human beings do have a different relationship with death that characterizes their uniqueness. With uncanny similarity to the outcome of the Heideggerian enquiry, the conclusion points to the fact that such a relationship can take on the form of an anticipation of death, of the possibility of foreknowing it, as the unique human prerogative. This is why we can view ourselves as '*dying people*', as mortal. Man relates to his future with the awareness of his own finitude.

Our relationship with death takes on, even in Kellehear's research yet with due differences, *some* of the features that Heidegger had already brought to light in his works and that it seems cannot be budged, not even if we agree to attributing a sort of awareness and recognition of death to animals in as much as they are sentient beings. Thus, indeed, we can recognize that perishing, intended as the simple biological death, is evidently too narrow a term even for animals; nonetheless, two modalities of ending do persist, distinct – one of humans and one of non-human beings – and incongruent. On the contrary, relinquishing their differences would lead to homologating animal and man: a conclusion that we might actually regard as utterly more anthropocentric than recognizing the unique relationships that animals and human beings each have with death and, more generally, with the world. Man and animals, despite not being separated by an abyss, as Heidegger saw, do each relate to the world and death in different ways. Such ways should be responsibly dwelled in differently, rather than broken down or superseded in favour of some kind of arguably constructive standardization, a *reductio ad unum*. Specifically concerning death, stating that there is a difference between man and animal does not

imply an attempt to deny the latter the recognition of death, the suffering caused by it, the strategies to avoid it, or the mourning ensuing it[12] (indeed, denying this fact generates human practices arguably unethical and in want of deep reflection). In contrast, recognizing the diversity illustrates a different relationship with death and with the surrounding world that involves man. This unique relationship is worth investigating and fathoming, and the Heideggerian discourse remains capable today of providing useful guidelines for this inquiry. To this scope, it is worth cross-referencing philosophical reflection and scientific data, as Heidegger advocated not in *Being and Time*, in which his discourse, although profound, remains blind to scientific knowledge, but in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, where he advocates for a true '*communal cooperation*' between metaphysics and positive research (Heidegger 1995: 190). By this communion, we can hope to open a new path into reflection on animal beings, one to which Heideggerian philosophy can contribute, albeit within the bounds of a perspective that, as is well known, had its paramount interest in Being and *Dasein*.

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[12] The elements here discussed are each linked to death in a different way: some concern the relationship of the individual with his or her own death, some concern how the deceased are considered. We must point out that Heidegger is interested in the relationship that the individual develops with his or her own death, while the issue of the deceased is only hinted at in *Being and Time*. In pondering the issue of the deceased, Heidegger reckons that access to one's own mortality cannot be achieved through the experience of the death of others (Heidegger 1996: 221–224). In these two different scopes, we should recognize the different natures of scientific and ontological inquiry.

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From Mortals to Living Beings. A Matter of Responsibility

Fabio Polidori

Abstract The dimension of the «living being» has somehow been neglected, though not ignored, by Heidegger also in the main texts in which he mentions the animal or various animals. I will try to show that the very, and always partial, consideration of «the living being», may enclose certain elements that point towards a specific relevance of «the living being» which would need further definition. *From mortals to living beings* aims to express the sense of the action of «human beings» (mortals) that originates in the living being and is involved in it. This action is always already a response which originates from the living being and is always and also directed to it as its goal. I propose to call this response «responsibility».

Keywords Mortals · Living beings · Animal · Action · Responsibility

Heidegger more than once wrote that man and animal, man and the rest of the living beings, are separated by an abyss. Yet it is evident that this separation cannot concern the entire dimension of the human being. Man, as living being, is something that lives in and belongs to the dimension of the «living being». This fact would prevent one from accepting the image of the «abyss» as utterly radical. A *philosophical* bridge is needed to re-connect man with the animal, and this bridge can be found within the sphere of the «living being». This bridge – this essay claims – is to be found in action, which, for man – for the being-there, which, as Heidegger says, is capable of his own death – is always characterized by sense. This is a type of transcendence which the human being, unlike the animal, cannot be without, in the same way as mortals cannot be outside the dimension of the living being. For this reason their action is founded on a responsibility which is a response from the living being to the living being. This response cannot be eluded nor avoided and in this,

F. Polidori (✉)
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici / Department of Humanities, University of Trieste, Trieste, Italy
e-mail: polidori@units.it

C. Di Martino (ed.), *Heidegger and Contemporary Philosophy*, Contributions to Hermeneutics 8, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56566-4_7

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paradoxically, lies the responsibility which precedes any taking of responsibility itself.

I would like to take the cue from a rather well-known text, written by Heidegger, which may indeed surprise both because of the sudden reference that it makes to an issue that has not appeared in the previous paragraphs and as this same issue was abruptly abandoned: «Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do so. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between death and language flashes up before us, but remains still unthought. It can, however, beckon us toward the way in which the nature of language draws us into its concern and so relates us to itself, in case death belongs together with what reaches out for us, touches us».[1] At this point, I shall not discuss the distinction which Heidegger makes between men and animals in regards to death, nor shall I linger on the countless issues that concern the accounts he gives of «animals» which vary in adequacy.[2] Not for the moment, at least. Instead, I shall focus on what has been totally neglected in this passage; a passage in which «mortals», «animals», «speaking», «death», «language» – with their intertwined connections, their mutual exclusion-and-inclusion mechanisms, and the at times important effects that they have on our understanding of the man/animal differences and on in a broader sphere – create a topic so complex and dense as to possibly blind even Heidegger himself and prevent him as well as others from seeing something which, in my view, can only arbitrarily be kept off stage. What I am referring to is the living being, although one must specify from the very beginning in what sense these terms – «living being», «living beings», «life» – are to be here understood, or, for the sake of a better understanding, in what sense they should *not* be understood. Very quickly, therefore, and even provisionally: not life in the sense in which Heidegger (a very young Heidegger, for example) uses it, «the original region of phenomenology», a region in which phenomenology should be the «original science»;[3] nor «life» or «the living being» in its

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language* (1959), translated by Peter D. Hertz, Harper & Row, New York 1971, pp. 107–108; see also Id., *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures* (1994), translated by Andrew J. Mitchell, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana 2012, p. 107: «An animal cannot die; it comes to an end. This may go along with the fact that the animal cannot think. Thinking lives by an elective affinity with death». These two texts are part of two lectures given by Heidegger at the *Studium Generale*, Freiberg University, a few months apart from each other, the first in the summer of 1957 and the second in the winter of 1958.

[2] Several essays and monographs have elaborated these issues, which Jacques Derrida himself tackled so often, more specifically in: *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the Question* (1987), translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1989; «"Eating Well" or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida» (1989), in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, edited by Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy, Routledge, New York – London 1991, pp. 96–119; *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2006), Edited by Marie-Luise Mallet, translated by David Wills, Fordham University Press, New York 2008; see also Carmine Di Martino, *Figure dell'evento. A partire da Jacques Derrida*, Guerini e Associati, Milano 2009, p. 133 sgg., Felice Cimatti, *Filosofia dell'animalità*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2013, and Fabio Polidori, *Dal postumano all'animale*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine, pp. 103–135.

[3] See M. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology (1919–1920)*, edited by Hans Helmuth Gander (1993), translated by Scott M. Campbell, Bloomsbury Academic, London 2013.

strictly and radically biological or biologistic sense, as it is a well-known fact that Heidegger distanced himself on numerous occasions from these concepts, not only because they fell within the sphere of a specialized scientific approach but also due to the inevitable «metaphysical» prejudice which is implicated in them. In this essay I argue that what «life», «the living being» or «living beings» may signify or *positively* designate, in this case, is to be found in their very having being removed, or at least neglected, when considering the complex interplay that connects «mortals», «animals», «speaking», «death», «language».

Consequently, I will demonstrate how the dimension of the living being, which does not coincide with any of these five terms (it cannot replace them, nor can it be replaced by them) has somehow been neglected, though not ignored, by Heidegger, not only in this specific text, but also in the main texts in which, for example, he mentions the animal or various animals of his own conceptualizations. Instances of these include his 1929–1930 lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* or in his lecture courses on *Nietzsche*, where Nietzsche's philosophy is seen as the ultimate culmination of metaphysics, in the sense of a reduction of Being to *animalitas* as the fundamental feature of beings, by now totally forgetful of Being.[4] I will also try to show that the very, and always partial, consideration of «the living being», both thematically and in the parts focusing on the animal and the biological, may enclose certain elements that point towards a specific relevance of «the living being» which – as it must be obvious by now – would need further definition.

It thus seems that «the living being» and the sphere of «living beings» were not directly thematized by Heidegger, although he does discuss them on more than one occasion in his texts, including the more significant ones. The feature of being «mortal» typifies human beings, or rather being-there, in that central attribute which Heidegger seeks to shelter from the prejudice, or prejudices, of «humanism», a concept which represents an unquestionably important albeit implicit indication concerning the imbalance in the life/death relationship. Indeed even through life and death, living beings and mortals are never simply juxtaposed in an obvious, predictable and universally accepted alternative, and it is possible to argue that the sphere of the mortal being and of mortals is, ontologically speaking, more important than that of the living being or of living beings. Furthermore, though it is obvious that mortals are such only in their being living beings, such a patent statement does not yield any specifically relevant meaning in this context. From a philosophical point of view, and especially from the point of view of Heidegger's line of thought,

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[4] See Id., *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics. World, Finitude, Solitude (1929–1930)*, edited by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (1983), translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1995, and Id., *Nietzsche* (1961), translated by David Farrell Krell, HarperCollins Publisher, New York 1991, volumes 3 and 4, pp. 147–148: «The essence of man is universally and consistently established throughout the history of metaphysics as *animal rationale*. In Hegel's metaphysics, a speculatively-dialectically understood *rationalitas* becomes determinative for subjectivity; in Nietzsche's metaphysics, *animalitas* is taken as the guide. Seen in their essential historical unity, both bring *rationalitas* and *animalitas* to absolute validity».

the «essence» of those special living beings who undeniably are human beings is not so much in the fact that they are living beings but rather the fact that they are mortal. In other words, from Heidegger's effort to articulate the «essential» factor of human beings emerges a pronounced unevenness in the death/life pair; if taken according to what Heidegger has often called, with a certain dose of contemptuous diffidence, «common intellect», the life/death duo represents a well-balanced and somewhat constant exchange of logic-dialectical opposites, the whole spectrum of Heidegger's main considerations instead prioritizes the sphere of the mortal over that of the living, and this precisely from the perspective of the essence; this, as it is well-known, already from that existential which goes under the name of «Being-towards-death».

This means that Heidegger does not hesitate to ignore, and one might say almost completely, any nexus or reciprocity between «mortal» and «living being»;[5] and this is as it is mortals as mortals to essentially «allow» the sphere of the living being as living being. In addition, the possibility of an «admission» to the domain of the living beings would consequently be derived from what is the essential and existential feature of human beings, who, precisely because they are mortal and speaking, can encounter the phenomenon of the living being as such. However, apart from the plausibility of such an essential and momentous consideration – the significance and value of which cannot be overestimated within the philosophical context of the twentieth century, or even beyond it – in it a certain short-sightedness in Heidegger's consideration of life, of the feature of living beings which nevertheless continues to be an essential part of humans, can be seen. It would not be correct to trivialize this issue through, for instance, coming to the conclusion that Heidegger was of the belief that human beings are more mortal than living beings or that being mortal, in other words being capable of death as death, means that life is a less relevant attribute in their essence of human beings. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Heidegger's «vision» offers an idea of human beings, of being-there, in which the quality of living being is unequivocally obscured while that of being mortal is prioritized. Such a position has produced a double effect; firstly, the focus and thematization of «life» (also in its most emblematic aspects, not only from a biological point of view, such as birth or growing) is for Heidegger of secondary importance, to the point of almost becoming irrelevant if compared – and not only in terms of the extent of focus – to his treatment of the mortal factor in human beings. This is in spite of the fact that in his early thought (until the point in which, and we could claim at the risk of sounding too simplistic, «Being-towards-death» appeared in his conceptual horizon) he focused rather intensely on the sphere of «life», but primarily recognizing it as a sphere within which a foundational experience for phenomenology, and hence for philosophy tout court, was to be found.[6] Secondly, it must be remembered that «life», or rather the sphere of «living beings» – though considered, in the case of

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[5] Id., *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, and Id., *Parmenides (1942–1943)*, edited by Manfred S. Frings (1982), translated by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1992.

[6] See Id., *Basic Problems of Phenomenology (1919–1920)*.

Being-there, from the perspective of the sphere of being mortal and speaking – as it manifests itself in animals, for their being «non-mortal» living beings, was never significantly discredited by Heidegger, and he never voiced any discriminatory or hierarchically-oriented consideration on them. This is spite of the alleged utterly Cartesian method which some – beginning with Jacques Derrida – claim that Heidegger employed in his considerations of animals.

While Derrida's criticism of Heidegger's thought on animals is well-known, I have already sought to show how it was partially, if not entirely, unfounded.[7] Indeed, it is worth reminding the reader at this point of how Heidegger was careful to safeguard what he himself defined as «the mystery of the living being» when, towards the end of his Parmenides course[8] and following some of Rilke's own considerations, he discusses the position of animals in relation to the «open» and their exclusion form the «conflict between unconcealment and concealment». Nor can we forget that Heidegger identifies «an uncanny hominization of […] the animal, and a corresponding animalization of man» as the ultimate consequence of the «biologism of the nineteenth century and of psychoanalysis».[9] Heidegger's impartial censure of both the anthropomorphisation of animals and of the corresponding animalization of man should really make it clear that we are not dealing with a hierarchical conception of living beings. At best, what we could envisage would be the introduction of a difference in the nature of man and animals, which nevertheless would not give origin to any hierarchical vision, as indeed could occur if this difference, or these differences, implied or comprised gradation, as has been the case for evolutionism, biologism and, broadly speaking, science. Furthermore, if living beings are indeed enigmas, then any attempt to introduce a hierarchical order would be naïve.

Of course, it is beyond a doubt that there are exclusions in Heidegger's considerations. For example: «man, and he alone, is the being that looks into the open and sees the open in the sense of the ἀληθές»;[10] but an exclusion does not necessarily give rise to a univocal hierarchy within the entity, nor does it pander to the advantage of only one of the two elements involved; furthermore, the dimension of the «uncanny» affects both animals and human beings alike. It must also be observed that in Heidegger's winter 1929–1930 lecture course there were many fluctuations when he discussed having and not having world of animals; in it, nothing is said about animals if not in relation to the question of the world: the world-poor nature of animals is indeed established, but such poverty does not result in any inferiority, disadvantage or imply a secondary position of any sort.[11]

I believe that if one wanted to see within Heidegger's considerations a desire for or even the possibility of a notion of some form of inferiority that animals had to

[7] See F. Polidori, *Dal postumano all'animale*, pp. 103–135.

[8] M. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 160.

[9] Ivi, p. 152.

[10] Ivi, p. 155.

[11] See Id., *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.

man, or a discrimination of that specific dimension of the living being as non human
or non mortal living being, one should not follow the predictable pattern of hierar-
chical subordination. Rather, if a certain neglect or a certain hasty attitude towards
animals or the living being is to be found in Heidegger's texts – and this only in
hindsight and from a deeply different cultural perspective – these must be under-
stood, at least initially, in terms of a symptom, which functions also as a form of
respect and of caution for a dimension which, in the end, is not accessible to us, i.e.
not accessible to «mortals»: I am here referring to Heidegger's claim that the living
being is a mystery. This mystery – we must stress – «goes unheeded» and is disre-
garded, as mystery, by the incursions of science in its many branches, beginning
with chemistry and psychology.[12] Maybe the most significant and unsettling feature
which can be found in the texts where Heidegger discusses life, animals and living
beings, is the lack of attention pertaining to the sphere of the living being as a sphere
which cannot, and should not, be separated and erased from the domain of human
beings, of the Being-there, or of mortals. This absence results in the end – and spe-
cifically, in light of what I have written – in a sort of removal of mortals from living
beings, as mortals are not considered as *mortals and as living beings* together.
Heidegger's vision of that entity which – aside from being «capable of death as
death», capable of having language, speech and therefore access to the living
being – is without a doubt also a *living being* is lacking, or partial and omissive to
say the least, as far as this essential dimension of mortals is concerned. It is an omis-
sion which, in my view, should not be ignored.

　　Therefore, it might be presumed that Heidegger's «essential» discussions and
considerations of «the living being» are very limited or even deficient, and cannot
appeal, on a more foundational level, to the respect for the mystery which the living
being is, since mortals are precluded from accessing the sphere of the animal as liv-
ing being which cannot «experience of death as death». This could particularly be
due to the fact that animals belong *exclusively* to the domain of the living being, do
not have any corresponding feature in the case of «mortals»; and as a matter of fact,
when speaking about «mortals», it does not make any sense to say that they belong
to the sphere of mortality, especially if exclusively so, since «mortals» are such only
as always *also* living beings. It is indeed commonplace to believe so: mortals need
to be «living beings», while the opposite does not hold true. Nevertheless, apart
from this combination of opposites or mutual relation between the part and the
whole, something which is not simply identifiable as a mere exchange of logic-
dialectic positions might here be detected. It should be remembered that within the
sphere of «mortals» lies the feature by which any engagement with the living being
manifests itself in the only way in which «manifestation» is possible, i.e. through
that access to entities which is reserved only to «mortals», who, as capable of
«experiencing death as death», are also characterized by language, by their dwelling
in language, and by their establishing of that kind of «transcendence» which affects
human beings as «mortals» with respect to any other non-human living being.

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[12] Id., *Parmenides*, p. 160.

Consequently, what else can we «know» of «the living being», what other experience can we have or even imagine with regards to «the living being», if not through (our) condition of always being mortal, or through what is accessible to us through our experience and through language? (We should also ask ourselves what «knowing» and «experiencing» the living being means when there is no discontinuity, no separation, no divorce between this experiencing and the self-experiencing it, not even between mortals and their own death as this death, as long as mortals are still alive, is not yet actual, while life, living, and therefore, the sphere of «the living being» is constantly attached to these mortals.)

In the living being, and beginning with the sphere of those specific living beings which «mortals» are, lies a sort of a-symmetry. This is almost an inner alterity, the alterity of «mortals» in respect to the living being in its totality and in respect to their own very feature as living beings; a kind of inner transcendence which is internal to their (own) immanence, i.e. the immanence of the living being. This sort of alterity, when taken in respect to the living being, is internal to (and inseparable from) the living being itself; in it, the sphere of the living being seems to escape any form of understanding, any essential determination, and to hide itself within the fascinating dimension of the «mystery», to which no access is allowed, as Heidegger himself seems to think.[13] Yet, in the light of this radical imbalance, the alterity generating it, and of the inaccessibility stemming from it, an admission to living beings might be found should the relationship between the living being and mortals be taken from another perspective. This might come to us from the notion of «action» and from a perspective which I will call, for lack of a better term, «responsibility». I have used the expression «for lack of a better term» because a word such as «responsibility», though it will be used in this context as part of the semantic field of «responding», is inevitably and immediately connected to the area of ethics, an area from which, nevertheless, a certain distance should be kept. This, to begin with, is because Heidegger – though not a believer in partitions for philosophical fields – was never interested, or so it seems, in a «peremptory directive and for rules that say how the human being, experienced from ek-sistence toward being, ought to live in a fitting manner».[14] In addition, if this is taken to be true, then «the thinking that

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[13] Id., *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 179: «the difficulty here is not merely one of *content* with respect to *what* life as such is but is equally and almost more emphatically a *methodological* one: *by what path* can and should we gain access to the living character of the living being in its essence? In what way should life, the animality of the animal, and the plant-character of the plant be made accessible to us? It is not sufficient merely to provide a morphological description of the animal's form, its limbs, and so on; it is insufficient to explore the physiological processes and then to add on some form of animal psychology. For in all of this we have already presupposed that the animal is alive, that in its behavior the animal is also disposed in a certain manner. How are we to get to the bottom of this? The animal can perhaps neither observe itself, nor communicate any such observations to us. And even if the animal expresses itself and announces itself, as it seems to us, in a variety of expressive sounds and movements, it is we who must first interpret and analyze such forms of expression».

[14] Id., *Letter on «Humanism»*, translated by Frank A. Capuzzi, in Id., *Pathmarks* (1976), edited by William McNeill, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 268.

inquires into the truth of being and so defines the human being's essential abode from being and toward being is neither ethics nor ontology […] is neither theoretical nor practical»,[15] then neither ethics, nor ontology nor any other category or modality of philosophical discourse is adequate to tackle what, within the relationship between mortals and the living being, may be well meant as a manner of man's «essential dwelling». I will therefore look toward articulating some considerations regarding a certain notion of responsibility (which will be used in a somewhat atypical connotation, mainly connected to its etymon), which will have to remain outside the province of ethics, both semantically and thematically, even an only apparent one. My goal is to show how there exists a relationship, or rather, a whole series of relationships between living beings and mortals, between mortals, living beings and the living being which do not fall within any type of differential linearity nor within any ontic-ontological hierarchy; and that these relationships do not take the shape of any convincing foundational base, as might be the case if we were discussing these issues from a purely natural or scientific perspective (evolutionism, creationism, etc.). Indeed, if this was our perspective, it would be almost inevitable to derive from those relationships a number of ontological or ethical considerations to the point that they could, in fact, claim for themselves a foundational role.

First, we need to critically look into that notion of action which opens and closes the *Letter on «Humanism»*, a text which owes its reputation mainly to the fact that many of its considerations are distant from that redemptive vision of the human which was needed and hoped for after the end of the World War II. The letter begins by reminding us that «we are still far from pondering the essence of action decisively enough», and that «we view action only as causing an effect. The actuality of the effect is valued according to its utility».[16] To this, Heidegger responds, shortly before the end of the letter, by claiming that «thinking is a deed», a deed «that also surpasses all *praxis*», and that we «measure deeds by the impressive and successful achievements of *praxis*», while «the deed of thinking is neither theoretical nor practical, nor is it the conjunction of these two forms of comportment».[17] Apart from what thinking might be (and is, as shown in this text) understood as (since, indeed, it «inquires into the truth of being and so defines the human being's essential abode»),[18] action is removed from any «ethical», «practical» or simply normative frame that could claim a right to establish its value or its sense.

We can therefore consider a notion of action the essence of which has not yet been thought through sufficiently in-depth and the meaning of which could be that of being free from any extrinsic constraint: not only for its effectiveness on goals and aims but also for the «ethical bond»; Heidegger himself hopes that «the greatest care» is fostered upon this ethical bond in the age of technological human beings.[19]

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[15] Ivi, pp. 171–172.

[16] Ivi, p. 239.

[17] Ivi, pp. 274, 275.

[18] Ivi, p. 271.

[19] Ivi, p. 268.

Yet, could we (and should we) think of action according to that thinking «that inquires into the truth of being» in order to determine «the human being's essential abode»? Should we not conceive the essence of action within a perspective which sees action itself not only within the perimeter of the human or of humanism, i.e. within that sphere which Heidegger defines «mortals», but reach out to consider action not only as that which pertains to mortals alone, but also as that which pertains to mortals *always as living beings in their essence*? Should we also not consider the sphere of action – though pertaining mortals only – as the sphere in which not only are mortals involved, but in which action itself – meant as that place where something which is close to sense, and even «thinking», is produced – cannot be separated from the domain of the living being, of living beings? This would mean a sphere, in which «mortals», in respect to the living being and to living beings, and in spite of the inaccessibility of the living being as such, which is destined to remain a «mystery» in itself, are involved in a mode which cannot not *respond also* to the issues of the living being nor can it not take the responsibility of the living being itself. This would not be because, predictably enough, only that which is alive can allow for action to happen (only as living beings can «mortals» act), but because, based on the point of view of an essential consideration, in action the sphere of the living being is always to be found, and cannot *not* be found: the sphere of the living being which, co-essential to mortals and almost inaccessible to them, encompasses the living being as a whole, with every single living being, and «mortals», being included.

From mortals to living beings aims to express the sense of an action which precedes willpower and determination, since these are always associated to specific subjects and individuals; the sense, therefore, of an action that originates in the living being or even *is* the living being which does not cease to exist in «mortals»: «mortals» are essentially involved in it (every distinction between «mortals» and living beings, at the sole level of the living being, can only lead to abstractions), they cannot be exempted from it and must necessarily account for it. Maybe a possible, though perhaps reductive, similitude may be decision-making; specifically, the kind of passivity which is always part of any decision-making, not when one makes a decision, but when one must decide without having decided to decide, unaware, or unconsciously. This would be, so to speak, an «active» action which is always already a response, a response to the «activity» of action in which, passively, we always are; a response which comes before (and virtually founds) every manifestation, modality and performance of behavior of «mortals», and, since it always originates from the living being, is always and also directed to it as its goal. I propose to call this response «responsibility», and I see it as passive, and maybe, originary: it is from this response that any definite, decided and accomplished modality of action can (and does) only derive, as if it was indeed this response, this responsibility to come before and to found the action in which mortals make themselves subjects of actions and decision-making, the sense and the performance of which are always directed to the living being according to the determination of action which presents itself as decision-making of the living being.

I will thus look towards focusing attentively on my topic by concentrating on the issue of responsibility. If action is considered only by taking into account its effects and intentions, as it is indeed commonly done, it becomes clear that it may only occur within a sphere which is characterized by a subjective element, and this in turn exists before action itself and from which action originates. This subjective element is then acknowledged as the origin of the responsibility of that which will follow in terms of actions, or actions. In this case, responsibility will have to be intended only as that which can be ascribed to a subject (also by itself), and this subject will consequently be considered as that which precedes and «responsibly» founds its actions and their effects. If action is regarded as that which is given to «mortals» – but also, to some extent, destined to them, imposed on them and never spared – as the mode of their «essential dwelling», of their «starting from beings and moving toward being», and always *within* the sphere of the living being and not inside the abstraction of a transcendental dimension with regards to the living being, then those specific living beings that go by the name of «mortals» may be seen as a distinctive *fold* of the living being itself, a sort of auto-affection of the living being. This is certainly not a stage of evolution in some kind of biological progress, nor the goals of some theological privilege, but rather an auto-affection of the living being which thus becomes immediately a type of response to the living being itself. *Almost* a transcendence, an almost-transcendence – where mortals, human speakers are placed – and which never abandons the immanence of the living being.

The separation of mortals from living beings is the sign of a transcendence in which all the essential determinations of mortals are to be found: their being capable of their own death, language, thinking, action. However, because this very transcendence belongs to mortals and mortals alone, it never radically excludes the living being, the context of life and of living. In this sense, the transcendence of response, of responsibility and of action, all of them placed at the level of Being as «*the transcendens pure and simple*»,[20] could be seen as separated by the living being only through the virtue of abstraction, as if they were living beings indeed, but of a special kind, of their own special and different kind as mortals. Perhaps this living being of a different kind resonates in the *impasse* and in those complications that one finds whenever the sphere of the body is scrutinized from a philosophical and essential point of view. This is a conclusion which Heidegger himself reaches more than once in his stumbling block to include within the sphere of mortals the sphere of all that which never cease to live, to be living, and in other words, of the bodily. His claims that «the bodily [*das Leibliche*] is the most difficult [to understand]», and that «the bodily in the human is not something animalistic»,[21] are probably signs that not only show the difficulty on his part but also of the stumbling block

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[20] Id., *Being and Time* (1927), translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell, Oxford 2001, p. 62.

[21] See Id., *Zollikon Seminars. Protocols – Conversations – Letters* (1987), edited by Medard Boss, translated by Franz Mayr and Richard Askay, Northwestern University Press Evanston, Illinois 2001, p. 231 and Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar, 1966/67* (1970), translated by Charles H. Seibert, The University of Alabama Press, Alabama 1979, p. 146.

which essentially forbids him from finding in «mortals» the sphere of the living being they nevertheless belong to.

However, it is not the aim of this paper to speculate the way in which analogies and correspondences between «mortals» and «living beings» come into play from a scientific point of view. Rather, what I have been trying to discuss is the instance of a living being, of the sphere of the living being – and, considered in its totality, how this instance (even if only in the sense of its drive) can be seen as an essential factor which we can be attributed to it – which enters into the mode of «mortals», of human speakers, and which thus brings about the feature of responsibility coextensive with action and preceding action. Responsibility here is not to be understood as that which is adopted by the self when he/she is making a decision or an attempt at anticipating its modality, its effects and its implications. Rather it has to be comprehended as the «originary» response of mortals to the instance of the living being; in other words, as the place in which «mortals» become a response to the living being and of the living being to which they essentially belong to; the sphere from which action (always belonging to man, but in this already too human) originates. All this shows how «mortals» belong to the sphere of life and of the living being (in its unconscious, in its drive) which no transcendence – whether we call it world, God, soul – will ever be able to hide.

To make these considerations that I have put forth more substantial, I would like to mention a text by Jean-Luc Nancy, «Originary Ethics», as Nancy articulates certain concepts within it, in particular on responsibility and on the specific feature which I have been trying to discuss thus far, which seem to be in line with the argument that I have been putting forth. These suggestions may help us clarify that modification of the notion of responsibility which – even before referring to the implications (at least in terms of intentions and results) which the self, in respect to his/her actions, must adopt – can help in explaining the founding element which action represents for «mortals». In this sense, and in accordance with my postulations thus far, action is not that in respect to which the self has a duty (or the possibility, the opportunity etc.) according to a moral or ethical prescription with regard to a specific action: «the *Dasein* can become aware of being that which must act the sense, only because it is the self-structured according to the relationship between its Being-there and its Being-the-there, between its existence and its ek-sistence; and this means in the first place a being-bodily of this sense and a being-sense of its bodily essence. Indeed, there is no action, not even action as thought, which is not "bodily"».[22] According to Nancy's definition, the origin of action is not

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[22] Jean-Luc Nancy, «Originary Ethics» (1996), in Id., *A Finite Thinking*, edited by Simon Sparks, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2003, pp. 172–195. The passage quoted in my text is not included in this translation; the french text is in Id., *La pensée dérobée. Accompagnée de «L'échappée d'elle» de François Martin*, Galilée, Paris 2001, p. 102: «le *Dasein* ne peut sans doute se découvrir comme ayant à agir le sens que parce qu'il est en lui-même structuré selon le rapport de son être-là à son être-le-là, ou de son existence à son ek-sistence, ce qui désigne en particulier un être-corps de son sens et un être-sens de son corps. Aussi bien n'y a-t-il pas d'agir, et pas non plus l'agir comme pensée, qui ne soit "du corps"».

disconnected from the living being, it is not cut off from that «bodily» in which the belonging of mortals to the living being is in fact condensed. Thus, the notion of responsibility (of making-sense and of action, which come before any given sense and any specific action) may work as an indication of the origin of action itself; of action as a response to (and of) the living being when the living being happens to be capable of its own death, of language, of discourse, of thought; when all that is indicated as action/reaction, interaction with the environment, and motion according to the stimulus/response mechanism etc. in the living being becomes action. If, in other words, every action is always responsible, this would not occur, according to this perspective, in the sense of its referring to norms and values (ethical, practical, productive, etc.), but instead in the sense that action is always a response which – rooted as it is in the instance of the living being, of the «bodily» – is due to, «acted» by «mortals» and is thus, necessarily and constitutively, directed to the living being.

«[To] talk of a respect for life immediately exposes one to all the problems of determining what "life" is, what "human life" is, and how it does or does not differ from "animal life" (or "plant life"), what its conditions of recognition, dignity, and so forth, might be. From this we can grasp how all the problems being raised today by bioethics as well as by human rights bring to light the necessity of heading back toward an ontology of action: not so that they can be resolved once and for all, but so that we can apprehend the absolute making-sense of the action that puts itself in the position of having, for example, to decide what a "human life" is – without ever having the ability to fix this *being* as a given that has been acquired once and for all».[23] In this passage of Nancy's reflections on Heidegger's «originary ethics», it would appear that it is possible to find the matter of an adequate positioning of what I have called «responsibility», which does not designate the taking responsibility of the self for one specific action that produces specific outcomes and leads to specific consequences. Rather, it designates «originarily» (borrowing from Nancy himself) that distinctive configuration by which there always is for «mortals», along with their being mortal, speaking, etc., an action; what Nancy calls an «ontology of action» may refer to the fact that action – which the Being-there cannot escape from, not even in the most perfect absence of action, and which would still count as a modality of action – always receives and opens up to the dimension of responsibility which mortals always belong to. Nevertheless, in this passage, there is perhaps something which reads too effortlessly, a sort of moving too easily from one level to another when the difference between the two is indeed crucial: «… so that we can apprehend the absolute making-sense of the action that puts itself in the position of having, for example, to decide what a "human life" is…». Here, between the «absolute making-sense» and the deciding «what a "human life" is», Nancy seems to introduce a passage from a certain will (or a certain «having to decide») which would once more seem to originate from a specific, determined and determining self, the subject of a certain will or of a certain having to. Maybe here, between the

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[23] Id., *A Finite Thinking*, p. 183.

absolute making-sense, between a certain ontology of action and the «deciding», there is no possibility to identify the arrival of a subject who, by virtue of a possibility, places itself in the position of decision-making.

Perhaps between these two stages, which is more than a passage from a (so to speak) potentially transcendental position to a more empirical (effectual) one, what is given is the impossibility to disjoin these two moments, as if they overlapped in the simultaneous, structural, and originary occurrence of a responsibility in which, paradoxically, it is the very «subject» of the responsibility itself (the being-there, mortals) that finds himself/herself in a non-subjective position. In other words, when the moment of the dimension of the absolute making of sense occurs, the decision-making, the «having decided» has also already occurred; the same goes for sense, as sense too has already occurred, at least one sense. Some responsibility and some response would already be there *before* any taking of responsibility. Indeed, a response has already been given before the formulation of any question/instance, and a decision has already been taken before its implementation. Akin to Nietzsche's lightning, the flash does not need the operation of a subject, but this subject is something «invented as an afterthought».[24] The response to the living being that mortals are and are unable to «not be» does not originate from the formulation of an instance or of a question: both are given structurally at the same time, before and outside any will, any decision, any rule and any subjective formation. If from mortals to living beings lies an issue of responsibility, then it must imply an «ontology of action» in the sense in which, before the self, before man, before ethics and before any norm, mortals have always occupied the place of response; the response to that living being to which they never cease to belong. In this sense, aside from language and death, the living being, in its own way, «belongs together with what reaches out for us, touches us».

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[24] Wilhelm Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson, translated by Carol Diethe, New York, Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 26 «and just as the common people separates lightning from its flash and takes the latter to be a *deed*, something performed by a subject, which is called lightning […]. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; "the doer" is invented as an afterthought»; see also Id., *The Will to Power*, translated by Anthony M. Ludovici, London, John Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1910, vol. II, Books 3 and 4, n. 481, pp. 12–13: «the "subject" is nothing given, but something superimposed by fancy, something introduced behind».

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Between Life and Existence. Heidegger's Aristotelianism and the Question of Animality

Andrea Le Moli

Abstract This paper starts by investigating the Aristotelian roots of Heidegger's stance toward animal life from 1924 lecture course "Basic concepts of Aristotelian philosophy" to 1929/30 lecture course "The fundamental concepts of Metaphysics". In following Aristotle, Heidegger displays the ontological transition from life to existence as grounded to the peculiar linguistic ability of human beings. In doing that, both Heidegger and Aristotle seem to establish a connection between an existential faculty (*logos*) and the apparently dominant position occupied by our species. On the other side, though, to be endowed with *logos* means for human beings to be able to de-centre themselves in recognizing the essential connection to other beings in the whole of life. This insight will concur in leading Heidegger after the 20's to the rethinking of the role played by man in the new structure of *Ereignis* and to crucial notions as *Lichtung, Open* and *Quaternity*. But this peculiar function seems also to specify Aristotle's system of human (anthroposcopic) knowledge as pointing to the idea of a general continuity of life, from simplest living beings via the sublunar world to the perfect life of stars and Deity. So apparently maintaining, despite Heidegger's claim of going beyond metaphysics, the connection with Aristotle strong even in the later stages of his thought.

Keywords Heidegger · Aristotle · Metaphyisics · Animal life · Anthropocentrism

1   Introduction

The transition from "life" into "existence" is a crucial point in the thought process that Heidegger develops during the 1920s. This transition appears to have occurred thanks to the ability of the *menschliches Dasein* (human being-there) to call into question its 'nature' and to include *otherness* and *difference* within its ontological constitution. This ability would thus also serve in allowing the human *Dasein* to overcome the traditional image of the human as that of a rational subject and to

A. Le Moli (✉)
University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy
e-mail: andrea.lemoli@unipa.it

reinstate itself in the chain that comprises all living beings. The overcoming of this formula is linked to the ability of human *Dasein* to discover the non-rational but living forces that determine its constitution on a more basic level. Thus, the conception of superior cognitive abilities reveal themselves as factors that are based on these forces and appear to lose their primacy in defining what constitutes a human being.

Despite Heidegger's intentions, this thesis has been critiqued by contemporary authors, such as Jacques Derrida[1] and Giorgio Agamben[2] (among others), who state that it does not accomplish its original task, which is to challenge the traditional conception of anthropocentrism grounded on man's intellectual primacy. Heidegger's model has been viewed by these authors as a representation of a subtler form of *anthropogenism* into which man loses his rational primacy only to emancipate himself more radically from mere *animal* life. By putting forth this theory, Heidegger is thus charged with not having effectively overcome the philosophical tradition he intended to challenge and remains bound by Western anthropocentrism in the matrix that was essentially defined by *Aristotle*.[3]

This objection needs to be explored further in light of the more recent tendencies that have occurred in Aristotelian scholarship, in particular, the new studies of Aristotle's *Biology*. Currently, three critical assessments seem to encapsulate the debate regarding Aristotle's presumed anthropocentrism: The first assessment insists on judging Aristotle's evaluation of the place of man in the series of living beings as a *hierarchical* one, which could provide the conceptual ground for the historical Western discrimination of non-human life-forms;[4] The second assessment judges Aristotle's views as being deeply ambiguous;[5] The third assessment attempts to reconstruct Aristotle's various and scattered opinions and lineate it with a more neutral view.[6]

New Aristotelianism would not be the only participant in this discussion, though. The connection between Heideggerian and Aristotelian thought to anthropocentrism has been newly brought into focus by certain perspectives that operate more explicitly in the domain of research, and are articulated in the various fields of *Animal studies*, *Animal rights studies,*[7] *Animality studies,*[8] *Zooanthropology,*[9] *Philosophy of animality*[10] or *Zoography.*[11] Consequently, this gives us the chance to

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[1] Derrida (2006).

[2] Agamben (2004).

[3] On the debate concerning Aristotle's anthropocentrism, see Sedley (1991).

[4] See Sorabji (1993).

[5] E. g. De Fontenay (1998).

[6] See Labarrière (2005).

[7] See Singer (1975) and Regan (1983).

[8] As an introduction to animality studies, see Lundblad (2009).

[9] See on this Shepard (1996).

[10] See Cimatti (2015, 2016).

[11] See Calarco (2008).

reinvestigate the critical relationship between Heidegger and Aristotle in order to show the extent in which their presumed "anthropocentrism" is based on something in common.

2   Textual Confrontation: Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy (1924)

Two texts can be considered as most representative when tracing back the Aristotelian stance that is found at the core of Heidegger's anthropocentrism. The first one is a lecture course that Heidegger held in Marburg in the summer of 1924, called *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy.*[12] The second one is also a lecture course that was held in Freiburg five years later (in the winter of 1929/30), and this was entitled *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude.*[13] During this particular timeframe, Heidegger's aim was to take the traditional definition of *man as rational animal* back to a more basic hermeneutical level, or in other terms: to show how the human's "superior" abilities emerge as specifications of more basic instances of life. According to this perspective, Aristotle is considered in a twofold way: 1. For having held the theory of the general continuity of life and 2. For having shown that various specifications of life can be considered variations of the same basic structure: movement and, in particular, self-movement.[14]

Indeed, the 1924 lecture course *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* is one of the crucial points of this enterprise. In this *Vorlesung*, Heidegger begins with an Aristotelian notion of life to show how far human specific abilities, such as discourse (*logos*), intellect (*nous*) and deliberation (*proairesis*) exceed the range of mere "animal" life, along with how far their continuity could be considered in relation to the latter. Undeniably, *logos, nous* and *proairesis* are abilities only human beings seem to be endowed with. Yet, in the 1924 lecture course, they do not seem to indicate the man's discontinuity in the general dimension of Being. On the contrary, they seem to specify the man as a particular case of Being-in-the-world, that is to say: of the basic structure of animal life *in general*:

> "Life" refers to a mode of being, indeed a mode of being-in-a-world. A living thing is not simply at hand (*vorhanden*), but is in a world in that it has its world. An animal is not simply moving down the road, pushed along by some mechanism. It is in the world in the sense of having it.[15]

This basic structure implies features that are shared by other animals, such as perception (*aisthesis*; *Vernehmen*), disposition (*diathesis*; *Befindlichkeit*), desire (*orexis*; *Sorge*), mobility (*kinesis kata topon*; *Umgang*), understanding (*praktike*

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[12] Heidegger (2009).

[13] Heidegger (1995).

[14] See on this McNeill (1999).

[15] Heidegger (2009, 14).

noein; *Verstehen*), circumspection (*phronesis*; *Umsicht*) and voice (*phone*, *Rede*).[16] As can be seen in general, these are the basic features out of which Heidegger will develop the general structure of existence in his work *Being and Time*. The specification of man is thus only possible through following the continuity of existence and the proximity with other animals' abilities. The passage continues, stating that:

> The being-in-the-world of the human being is determined in its ground through speaking. The fundamental mode of being in which the human being is in its world is in speaking with it, about it, of it. Thus, the human being is determined precisely through the *logos*.[17]

If *logos* is the main feature that, according to Aristotle, characterizes the human being, its role and relevance should be recoverable through tracing its origins back to other, more basic, forms of communication. That is to say, the human animal would thus be considered a particular case among animals that need to communicate to interact effectively with their environment: a particular social animal (*zoon politikon*).

In Heidegger's 1924 course, animal social life is described as an expression of life that is determined by a necessity for interacting in a communicative way with other members of a group in order to realize one's own individual abilities. The ontological structure of social life, as based on the ability/necessity to interact with others is, was termed by Heidegger as *Miteinandersein*. Insofar as this kind of interaction needs to be pursued communicatively, it becomes *Miteinanderreden*. Both forms are expressions of the Greek *koinonia*, which Heidegger translates as *Being-with-one-another*. Animal forms of social life are forms of Being-with-one-another, i.e. ways of Being-in-the-world that are determined by communication and signification. This basic definition also includes animals that are not endowed with *logos*. Furthermore, according to Heidegger, the importance of Aristotle's thesis is due to the connection that is established between what happens on the basic level of animal life and the way in which communication/signification expresses itself on the level of humans. Indeed, if a comparison between human communication and animal primitive signification is insisted upon, one would be able to state that the basic communication of animals work in a way that recalls what happens on the level of human *rhetoric*. Supporting this notion, Theodore Kisiel stated:

> The animal encounters its environing world in terms of pleasure and pain. It gives voice to this in a kind of "animal rhetoric" which entices or warns. Luring and alluring signs seek to bring the other animal into the same disposition, threats and warning would deflect it from a certain disposition.[18]

In putting the analysis of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* at the center of his 1924 lecture course, Heidegger insists on the continuous structure of animal (social) life and demonstrates how human discourse could be intended as a major variation of it. The effectiveness of basic animal communication would thus depend on the ability to share

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[16] As distinctively pointed out by Bailey (2011).

[17] Heidegger (2009, 14).

[18] Kisiel (1995, 295).

with the other members of the group/species the impressions of *pleasure* (*hedone*) and *pain* (*lype*). As such, the ability to push through a meaningful articulation of one's own ability to produce a noise (*phone*) that directs someone toward a possible source of nourishment or to pull someone back from a possible danger, is defined as:

> Living as being-in-a-world finds itself characterized by *hedone* insofar as the *hedy* is there. For animals, encountering the world in the character of the *hedy* is, for example, encountering a favourable feeding place and not a symphony. It is always something that is in the animal's surrounding world. This being that is there in the character of mattering-to-animals is indicated, animals give a "sign," *semeion*. It indicates beings that are there with the character of the *hedy*. The indicating gives no report about the being-at-hand of what is pleasing outside in nature, but rather this indicating and crying out is itself an enticing or a warning. The indicating of the being that is there is an enticement, a warning. Enticement and warning have, in themselves, the character of addressing itself to... Enticing means to bring another animal into the same disposition; warning is the repelling from this same disposition. Enticing and warning as repelling and bringing, in themselves, have in their ground being-with-one-another. Enticing and warning already show that animals are with one another. Being-with-one-another becomes manifest precisely in the specific being-character of animals as *phone*.[19]

The way in which the world is thus *open* to a social animal depends on the range of what needs to be shared with the other members of the group, i.e. on the relevance of an external impression in terms of the difference between a source of nourishment and possible danger. Certainly, the origins of animal *signification* are thus connected with the *significance* of the content that would need to be communicated. This is to say: the ability to connect a proper perception with an impression of *pleasure* and *pain* which can be shared with someone else, can thus be described as follows:

> It is neither exhibited nor manifested that something as such is there. Animals do not subsequently come along to ascertain that something is at hand; they only indicate it within the orbit of their animalistic having-to-do. Since animals indicate the threatening, or alarming, and so on, they signal, in this indicating of the being-there of the world, their being in the world. The world is indicated as *hedy* and, at the same time, it is a signalling of being, being- threatened, having-found, and so on.[20]

In taking inspiration from Aristotle and thus comparing basic forms of animal communication to human rhetoric, Heidegger is both establishing continuity and marking a difference into the realm of life. He propagates that the same basic ability to steer the behavior of other members of the group by associating the affection of pleasure and pain to a communicative content can evolve according to the physical dotation of each species' organic body. This means that communication's effectiveness can vary according to both the complexity of the physical and the social body, an occurrence that is precisely what occurs when the basic structure of socially communicative life evolves in the structure of human species.

As Heidegger stated in 1924, the aforementioned evolution takes place in grades and levels. To elaborate on this, he stated:

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[19] Heidegger (2009, 39).

[20] Heidegger (2009, 39).

> The manner and mode in which the world is there, the possibility of the being-there of the world in a living thing, depends on the basic possibility of the extent to which this living is closed up in itself or is awake, the extent to which being-in the-world is uncovered or has the character of the uncovered there, and thus the extent to which the world itself and being-in-the-world are discovered. Here, there are different gradations and levels.[21]

The fact that only human beings perform social life through articulated speech (*logos*) clearly illustrates the human modality in encountering the world by changing the basic determinations that are associated via language to the perceptive contents of the world. If non-human animals encounter the world via the basic determination of pleasure and pain and can communicate these impressions through the signalizing voice (*phone*), human animals can thus be viewed as representing an evolution of this structure.[22] That is to say: no human animal can turn back to the level of mere signalizing voice. The use of *logos* would thus be necessary and indispensable, even at the basic level of communication and social life.

Which determination distinguishes being-in-the-world through *logos* from being-in-the-world through *phone*?[23] According to Heidegger, human associated (political) life is based on the possibility of steering the behavior of human beings by sharing a particular kind of impressions. Instead of sharing the mere representations of pleasant and painful (that are common to animal life in general), human *logos* can let its bearer(s) encounter the world under the determination of good (*agathon*) and evil (*kakon*), proper (*dikaion*) and improper (*adikon*), conducive (*sympheron*), and its contrary (*blaberon*).[24] These latter are those that connect Aristotle's *Politics* directly to *Rhetorics* and should thus be considered as the first human specification of the animal's general ability to perceive and share the pleasant and the painful. Specifically, the property of conducive/*sympheron* emerges in Heidegger's 1924 lecture course as the key-determination in explaining the transition from basic social animals to human beings.

This leads to the question of what would be peculiar to the representation of the conducive/*sympheron*. Furthermore, how can this representation lie at the core of the transition from social animal in general to human form of animal life? Heidegger explains:

> *Sympheron* is "that which is conducive to..." toward the end. Something that is conducive is, in itself, a being that has a reference to something. This referring to something is not accidental to that which is conducive, but constitutes its very conduciveness. That to which what is conducive as such refers is designated as *to telos*.[25]

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[21] Heidegger (2009, 37).

[22] See Heidegger (2009, 39): "Aristotle supplies the reference to *phone* and *zoa* as *theria* at the outset, in order to give the correct background for the further being-characteristic of human beings in the world, for the *logos*-investigation."

[23] Cf. Heidegger (2009, 39).

[24] Reference is to Aristotle, *Pol.* A 2, 1253 a 14–16 ff.

[25] Heidegger (2009, 41).

The first feature which emerges would thus be the relationship between the *sympheron* and the *telos*-structure: something is addressed as a *sympheron* insofar as it does not exhaust its significance in its being-there but can lead to something else. For those (humans) who operate according to articulated speech (*logos*), the world is open as a chain, a series of possible *links* and *references.* We primarily do not encounter beings/objects in the world according to their material constitution. Rather, we would almost always encounter something in the world as a reference to something else, as an expression of a chain which links all beings in the world in a particular form:

> The world is at hand in the character of *sympheron* for beings who are in their world in the mode of *praxis meta logou*. Their being, characterized as being-there, is primarily in this way. The stick that I take in hand, the hat that I put on, are *sympheronta*. The stick is not primarily a piece of wood, or some such thing, but a stick. In this deliberating, the world explicitly keeps to its primary character of as such and such, as conducive to..., and precisely because *legein* in its primary manner and mode addresses the world as something: *legein ti kata tinos*. In speaking about something, I make it present, I bring it into the there, as this or that, in the character of as. It is the primary function of *logos*, and one that is sitting at every step, to explicitly separate, and bring into the there, the world in this character of referring to... Thus, it becomes clear that speaking in the world is, for human beings, the *deloun to sympheron*.[26]

Insofar it is determined by the *logos*, this structure takes the form of a peculiar *logizesthai*. This would be a form of discourse which proceeds from a determination to another establishing connection in terms of usefulness and instrumentality. The typical (logical) structure of this referring system is the nexus "if… ...then" which lies at the ground of deliberation (*proairesis*). The moment (*kairos*) of deliberation implies a contraction of time in which another function, *nous*, sees all the operations and passages that would be required to accomplish a task in a single shot. The logical system which is at work in the *proairesis* would therefore require a sort of quasi-perception (*nous*, intuition/intellection) of the totality of operations and instrumental references implied in the accomplishment of an action. The *logos* and *nous* that are at work in the *proairesis* see the action as a sequence of operations, references, and passages that are coherent with those already present, and would also be with in features of what is involved with action. In seeing the *telos* of the action as something which would determine the action from its beginning, this sequence is always projected into the future via another faculty, an avenue that Aristotle applies the word *phantasia* to. Although this latter is an ability that is also shared by other animals, only human *phantasia* can retain impressions and anticipate the results of an action in such a form that it allows man to insert his action in the whole of his group/species' life, and, to a certain extent, to weigh the consequences of an individual action for any being that populates his world.

In doing this, human living beings can thus overcome the animal condition in a way which implies both continuity with the other forms of animal life and still be an irreversible step ahead. This latter property is given by the fact that the "superior"

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[26] Heidegger (2009, 42–43).

abilities human beings develop also determine (in a sort of top-down process) the "merely animal" ones, i.e. the abilities we are supposed to share with other animals:

> The encounter-character of the world for the life of animals is the *hedy* and the *lyperon*; its encounter-character for the being of human beings is the character of the beneficial and the harmful, taken together: what is conducive and what is good. If one follows this demarcation through, one must remember that the determinate being-possibilities that animals reach are, as Aristotle's *De Anima* shows in its investigation of the being-characters of the living, not simply situated beside those of humans. Rather, like all possibilities that animals possess, they are also there in humans; not lying beside each other, but determined by the οὐσία of humans, their mode of being in the world, so that the character of the *hedone* undergoes a fully determinate modification, in accordance with the mode of being of human beings in the world. Here, however, Aristotle makes use of the opposition between the respective levels of discoveredness in which each way of living moves.[27]

What is specific to human living beings in this regard is the ability to perform actions by taking into account the whole system of instrumental references of associated life. This essentially means the ability to live by taking reference to a *totality* of meaningful beings in mutual connection. Human *logos* is not confined to signal danger by associating an impression of pain to some articulated noise, but works by essentially overcoming the material/individual constitution of something and letting something become a *reference*. Its typical structure is the *legein ti kata tinos*: to show something by referring to something else, which is based on a unique property of the human *logos*, the "as"-nexus.

The peculiarity of this kind of communicative (and social) form of language is to allow the formation of meanings that are not necessarily connected with a strategy or an operative behavior. One important feature of human *logos* is the ability to make something meaningful by representing, *in abstracto,* the totality of its features (essence) and of the possible connections that can link it to other sources of stimulus. *Logos* thus makes something meaningful by putting a perceived thing in connection (*symploke*) with something else. In human *logos,* we experience the world by representing something as something else, or better: by interpreting (*hermenuein*) something as (*als*) something else. We are able to interpret a flat stone as a surface upon which one can sit, stand, eat, or cut because we can frame that connection within a net of possible connections ruled by our social experience of the world according to a need we have to fulfill. Something appears as meaningful, i.e., useful for an operation, only within a totality of plausible connection possibilities which lie in the background. Things we perceive and whose representations we elaborate are always perceived and elaborated out of a totality of possible meanings (the totality of language) which we have inherited, rather than created. This totality precedes us and determines us as speaking animals in a way that is irreducible to other forms of life, and is the reason we are able to frame and interpret other forms of life as something related to ours not only according to the pain-pleasure dynamic.

We - Heidegger states - uniquely possess as animals, the possibilities of letting something "be", of considering something in a pure relationship with itself. We are

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[27] Heidegger (2009, 37–38).

the only animals upon earth that are capable of objectivity, ontology, and metaphysics. The connection among human specific abilities, *logos*, *proairesis* and *nous*, therefore determine the man's possibility at encountering the world *in general*, as a totality. In other terms, to give significance to the whole of life:

> The primary openness of human beings is grounded in *nous*. *Noein*, "supposing," is not limited to determinate regions of being as is *aisthesis*. However, *noein* is also possible for that which is not corporeally present. In this thinking-of-it, I am with it. Supposing can suppose everything; it is the mode of openness to everything. The uncoveredness of the being of human beings as being-in-the-world is characterized by *nous*. This *nous* is always a *nous tes psyches*, a *dianoeisthai*, supposing something as something. Just as *aisthesis* is, for the Greeks, a being approached by the world - something comes toward - so also is *dianoeisthai* a *dechesthai*, a "perceiving" - the world is encountered by me. *Noein* is, in a certain sense, a *pathos*, a being-approached by the world. This being-thus-in-the-world, characterized by the uncoveredness of *nous*, is possible only because the world is generally open, that *nous* is determined by a *nous* that uncovers the world in general.[28]

3   Continuity and Separation in Animal Life: The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (1929–1930)

This idea forms the basis of one of the most famous sections in the exposition that Heidegger pursued in the 1929/30 lecture on *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. It is a tripartition among the various possibilities to encounter a world according to the status of something "being". According to Heidegger, if something, like a stone, is worldless (*weltlos)* and an animal is poor in the world (*weltarm),* only a man can be considered world-forming (*weltbildend*)[29] i.e. capable of taking into account the totality of being for his own life. This tripartition is grounded in the way in which - as stated in 1924 lecture - Heidegger distinguished an animal's openness to the world according to its (linguistic) abilities, with the later textual additions portraying a closer description of these dynamisms and the related consequences. Due to the close adherence to the impressions of pleasure and pain that must be conveyed in signalization, animal linguistic life is *captivated* (*benommen*) by objects that populate its world. As Heidegger says, "To say that captivation is the essence of animality means: The animal as such does not stand within a potentiality for revelation of beings. Neither its so-called environment nor the animal itself are revealed as beings."[30]

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[28] Heidegger (2009, 220).

[29] Cf. Heidegger (1995, 177).

[30] Heidegger (1995, 248). On the theories of Jakob von Uexküll as a source for this Heideggerian principle, see Agamben (2002), 42: "Uexküll affirms - and thus formulates a principle that would have some success - that "no animal can enter into relation with an object as such," but only with its own carriers of significance". For a general overview of Uexküll's influence in the philosophy of twentieth century (Heidegger included) see Kull (2001).

Thus, it seems indisputable that, from Heidegger's view, men only have the possibility of reading other forms of animal life as part of a totality that includes everything, whereas the encirclements of meaning in the way in which other species live can only be fostered according to the primitive dynamic of pain-pleasure. Animal worlds (or a better term: environments) are not liable to touch each other ontologically, i.e.: to recognize each other in terms of letting something else simply "be". According to Heidegger, animals simply do not see (i.e. do not confer any meaning to) things in their world that are, according to the pain-pleasure dynamic, simply indifferent, and that do not play any role (either positive or negative) in their survival strategy, whereas "objectivity" entails seeing something as determined and meaningful only by its features, and not by the ways that we can make use of it. Animals do not need to go through the totality of things to experience something; neither do they need to address something in respect to the features that are not useful (or dangerous) for their existence. They are - in referencing Aristotle once again - incapable of *theorein*, of simply looking-at, of a look not guided by instrumentality.

Yet, this opinion also places Heidegger's perspective in a strange and twofold situation. If men are only capable of living in an ontological sense (which is called *existence*), i.e. by addressing something in itself, in its being, this also means that, due to the continuity of life-forms, human beings live in the highest conceivable form, and are at the top of an ontological *scala naturae*. Consequently, this implies that human beings technically *exist* because they experience life in the completeness of its coordinates, including death.

This is one of the most controversial points of the discussion that Heidegger puts forth in the 1929/30 course. Technically speaking, this means that only human beings die. All other animals simply cease to live, as "to die" means something radically different. This stems from their attitude to objectivity, i.e. to the ability to represent something as determined by itself and not by an individual look or perspective, which allows human beings to 'die'. As far as we know, only human beings can represent their death, i.e. represent their own life without themselves, and represent life as something which continues without a single human being. Indeed, we know this based on the notion that we can perform actions that are not immediately correlated to our own individual or species' good but can take into account the good of the action *in itself;* that we can perform actions against our own good for the sake of life itself, as it were. According to Heidegger, "to die", in an existential sense, would mean: to be able to carry out one's own life by representing death as its extreme possibility, by including the surviving of life in general to one's own existential project. This is what Heidegger calls "being finite", i. e. to be determined by a closure, by the impossibility of experiencing one's own death and by the awareness of this fact as a crucial aspect that rules and determines our existential projects.

All other animals would have limits, but are not finite. So, it is precisely due to the argument that a man's life holds a different rank in the universal continuity of life, that even man's death can be something more than a return to the world of bare matter. Only human animals can face death as the extreme possibility of life, i.e. as the possibility which determines all the others that constitute the human world. This

also explains why non-human animals are declared incapable of experiencing a sense of otherness, and, consequently, a genuine being-with-another. Yet, this also connects the human ability of *logos* with the capacity to become political; in brief, to experience life not only as a meaningful structure (*zoe*), but also as an ontologically exposed life (*bios*). This would therefore make it an associated life-form which operates on the basis of the inclusion of personal death into its own limits and rules.

However, if only human beings can die (and thus be both metaphysical and political), this would also suggest that only human beings can technically be "killed" and only human animals can be charged (for the time being, at least) with the murder of another (human) animal. In fact, this is congruent with our every-day perceptions. This also explains why we might feel that a dead human body deserves more respect than an animal carcass, and that the former should be honored with a funeral, a burial, or some other kind of ritual preservation. Specifically, this happens because the screaming of a dying man is connected to the possibility of *logos*, that is to say: to the possibility of its violent privation as something inhuman and unjustifiable. On the other hand, the screaming of a dying animal sends another signal: a mere note of pain and warning addressed to the other members of its limited world.

4   Recent Debates

Heidegger's attitude toward animal life, as expressed in the 1924 and 1929/30 courses, have become the starting point of many discussions by Jacques Derrida to Giorgio Agamben, along with other likeminded scholars. Heidegger's view has given Jacques Derrida the chance to trace back a common thought process that connects the most influential philosophers of the Western tradition:

> In spite of the immense differences and contradictions that separate them, which I would be the last to want to minimize [...] Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan share, vis-à-vis what they call "the animal," a considerable number of what I'll call "beliefs," which, if you prefer, you might name axioms, prejudices, presumptions, or presuppositions. In any case I would like to show that they, like Descartes, think that in contrast to us humans - a difference that is determined by this fact - the animal neither speaks nor responds, that its capacity to produce signs is foreign to language and limited or fixed by a program. Not one of them has ever taken into account the essential or structural differences among animal species. Not one of them has taken into account, in a serious and determinate manner, the fact that we hunt, kill, exterminate, eat, and sacrifice animals, use them, make them work or submit them to experiments that are forbidden to be carried out on humans. Apart from Lacan - but this, however, in no way changes the traditional axiomatics of his work - not one of them takes into account animal sexuality. Not one of them really integrates progress in ethological or primatological knowledge into his work.[31]

The interpretation quoted above operates, according to Derrida, within a strange paradox: they claim to ground the destruction of traditional subjectivity and to remove the sovereignty of the human being upon a new evaluation of Otherness

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[31] Derrida (2006, 89).

(Lacan, Levinas) and Difference (Heidegger). Instead, they appear to let these notions play only into the finite horizon of man's relationship with the elements of his environments, and with his world. This brings Derrida to the striking conclusions that what we may call a positive or tolerant attitude of human beings toward "animals" (so improperly called) is merely an expression of the same anthropocentrism. The will to recognize animals as "persons" or even "legal persons" is grounded upon the idea that only human beings have the right to concede rights to other forms of life, and only insofar as the latter appears to have human or quasi-human features, such as emotions, the capacity to suffer, cognitive abilities, and so on. The sovereign ability of the human language is so wide that we are able to let other forms of life "speak", i.e. to give words to silent things, to speak "for" whoever is not capable of speaking for itself. Thus, it is the same logic which moves us to concede rights to partially speaking people, such as children, disabled people, outsiders and - why not? - animals. However, this only depends on the range we assign to our language ability. What Derrida denounces is how the notion of difference and otherness that rule over our approach to the animal world are not radical enough. As long as they are intended to stem from an anthropomorphic perspective, they are still dependent on the identity of a subject that bears the trait of the divided psyche (as in Lacan), the ethical subject (as in Levinas) or the human being-there (as in Heidegger). In affirming its supremacy over other forms of life, this new kind of subject does not destroy the traditional idea of human sovereign subjectivity, but merely replaces it.

However, it is unfortunate that Derrida only leaves a hint at a positive approach to the question of animality, an approach that was more recently developed by a series of studies that aimed at making an an explicit difference between problems like the question of "Animal Rights" and "Animal Studies" and a radically new approach which should be made possible regarding the question of animality in general.[32] In these perspectives

> "animality" means a life that extends itself beyond the taxonomic boundaries Biology or Geology have fixed. Therefore, an animality event can be something which is not living. There is animality each time a life in this wider sense appears which is not forced into the limits of our classifications; a life which runs away from all sides; a life which is not worried by our ontological concerns.[33]

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[32] Among the various (and constantly increasing in number) tendencies that could be briefly quoted as paradigmatic of the current scenario: Animality Studies: an emerging interdisciplinary academic field focused on the cultural study of animals and animality. It can be distinguished from animal studies and critical animal studies by its resistance to animal rights or animal welfare as an explicit justification for work in this field (Lundblaud, 2002); Zoography: a perspective developed by Calarco (2008), who is opposed to Heidegger and Derrida's notion of difference: the idea of a radical indistinction which rules over any form of animal life, insofar as what specifies life in general is bodily and fleshy constitution; Philosophy of animality: a perspective recently developed among the others by F. Cimatti (2015, 2016).

[33] Cimatti (2015, 42).

The most interesting point in this perspective is that it gains its consistency from the idea that animality is something that should not be overcome but, rather, genuinely re-appropriated:[34]

> "Animality" means a life that completely and radically coincides with itself. On the contrary, since actual human life is completely detached from the immediacy of the body, there is no animality in human life. Human life is a zoological life without animality. Homo sapiens is human only because s/he does not know her/his own animality.[35]

Indeed, the adoption should be so apt that it can be extended to every forms of "life" in the broadest sense:

> And it is also something that can and should be extended to other forms of subsistence, insofar as these are grounded upon a bodily constitution. Animality is a life that simply lives the life it is actually living. From this point of view, animality is not restricted to animals or plants; a stone either stays where it happens to stay. Animality does not look for something else; it already is. Animality is not motionless, because it favours the intrinsic movement of life. In this sense, animality coincides with immanence.[36]

This new kind of criticism is anticipated in Giorgio Agamben's opinion, according to which philosophers like Heidegger "strove to separate man from the living being", and thereby re-established the very same "anthropogenic machine" that characterized modernity.[37] One of the most interesting points in this position is that it traces a common line in Western tradition all the way back to Aristotle's notion of life. In chapter IV of *The Open: Man and Animal*, Agamben investigates the *Mysterium disjunctionis,* which lies at the core of Aristotle's definition of life:

> For anyone undertaking a genealogical study of the concept of "life" in our culture, one of the first and most instructive observations to be made is that the concept never gets defined as such. And yet, this thing that remains indeterminate gets articulated and divided time and again through a series of caesurae and oppositions that invest it with a decisive strategic function in domains as apparently distant as philosophy, theology, politics, and—only later—medicine and biology. That is to say, everything happens as if, in our culture, life were what cannot be defined, yet, precisely for this reason, must be ceaselessly articulated and divided. In the history of Western philosophy, this strategic articulation of the concept of life has a foundational moment. It is the moment in *De anima* when, from among the various senses of the term "to live," Aristotle isolates the most general and separable one. […] It is important to observe that Aristotle in no way defines what life is: he limits himself to breaking it down, by isolating the nutritive function, in order then to rearticulate it in a series of distinct and correlated faculties or potentialities (nutrition, sensation, thought). Here we see at work that principle of foundation which constitutes the strategic device par excellence of Aristotle's thought.[38]

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[34] This idea is variously connected to the efforts by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to give sense to the post-nietzschean notion of "becoming animal". Also see on this, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 238) and Cimatti (2015).

[35] Cimatti (2015, 50).

[36] Cimatti (2015, 52).

[37] Agamben (2004, 39).

[38] Agamben (2004, 13–14). The reference is to Aristotle, *De Anima* 413 a 20 ff.: "It is through life that what has soul in it differs from what has not.1 Now this term "to live" has more than one sense, and provided any one alone of these is found in a thing we say that the thing is living—viz. think-

A foundational *divide et impera* thus lies, according to Agamben, at the core of the theory of the continuity of life, and one may be tempted to attribute it to Aristotle. Indeed, the isolation of nutritive life "constitutes in every sense a fundamental event of Western science".[39]

> The division of life into vegetal and relational, organic and animal, animal and human, therefore passes first of all as a mobile border within living man, and without this intimate caesura the very decision of what is human and what is not would probably not be possible. It is possible to oppose man to other living things, and at the same time to organize the complex—and not always edifying—economy of relations between men and animals, only because something like an animal life has been separated within man, only because his distance and proximity to the animal have been measured and recognized first of all in the closest and most intimate place.[40]

According to Agamben, the supposed Aristotelian theory of the continuity of life states that any form of life should be seen as emerging from something more basic, i.e. animal life includes nutrition as the capacity of assimilating nourishment in order to grow and decay. However, if this may appear to establish continuity among all living beings, it also gives birth to the idea that other capacities, such as sensation and local movement, pertain exclusively (or at least eminently) to animals. Further exploring this idea, it is possible to argue that some particular types of sensations, such as *phantasia*, only belong to certain animals, and that some particular kinds of verbal signalization, such as *logos*, pertain only to one species of animal, and so on. "Rational" powers, such as *logos*, *nous*, and *proairesis* thus prove the continuity of life insofar as they emerge from the animal substratum of human life. On the other hand, they break the continuity because they are not considered to be distributed equally among all living species but exclusively or eminently possessed by one species alone. This idea provides the basis for the Heideggerian thesis of animal's poverty of the world in a way that would need further investigation:

But if this is true, if the caesura between the human and the animal passes first of all within man, then it is the very question of man—and of "humanism"—that must be posed in a new way. In our culture, man has always been thought of as the articulation and conjunction of a body and a soul, of a living thing and a logos, of a natural (or animal) element and a supernatural or social or divine element. We must learn instead to think of man as what results from the incongruity of these two elements, and investigate not the metaphysical mystery of conjunction, but rather the practical and political mystery of separation. What is man, if he is always the place—and, at the same time, the result—of ceaseless divisions and caesurae? It is more urgent to

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ing, sensation, local movement and rest, or movement in the sense of nutrition, decay and growth. Hence we think of all species of plants also as living, for they are observed to possess in themselves a principle and potentiality through which they grow and decay in opposite directions... This principle can be separated from the others, but not they from it—in mortal beings at least. The fact is obvious in plants; for it is the only psychic potentiality they possess. Thus, it is through this principle that life belongs to living things... By nutritive power (*threptikon*) we mean that part of the soul which is common also to plants.". Quoted in Agamben (2004, 13–14).

[39] Agamben (2004, 14).

[40] Agamben (2004, 15–16).

work on these divisions, to ask in what way—within man—has man been separated from non-man, and the animal from the human, than it is to take positions on the great issues, on so-called human rights and values. And perhaps even the most luminous sphere of our relations with the divine depends, in some way, on that darker one which separates us from the animal.[41]

5   Conclusion

While the debate is still ongoing and a huge variety of critical thesis are still being proposed,[42] the proximity of Heidegger's thought in the twenties to the Aristotelian notion of life could indicate how to interpret his ambivalent position toward non-human animals anew. The Aristotelian idea of a centrality of man in the system of life is justified, not only from a mere biological point of view (not to mention the considerations made in his works, especially when dealing with human practices, such as *Politics* and *Ethics*), but also by the fact that the perspective of our species is the only one that can provide the point of departure of any human investigation. What we see in the world externally bears the traits of the *proteron pros hemas*, of what is better known to us. That is to say, it appears in the light shed by our perspective and interests, and from our point of view. Yet, in taking comparisons and establishing connections, in retracing similarities and analogies, man can shift the center of his investigation at any time and make something else be the eminent case of a process, the best incarnation of an ability, and so on.[43] In doing this, man maintains his function of a logical center of the investigation, but de-centralizes himself in seeing something else as the best representative of a feature we have in common or as possessing a particular ability that we are not endowed with. Due to the congenital curiosity of his species and the possibility that he has to make science of almost anything (that is to say to compare his specific situation with many others and find analogies and differences), man can provide nature with a toehold in order to see many living beings from a single point of view, a view in which he calls "life". The unity of life appears from the perspective of man who finds proximities and connections among different forms of life. Insofar as man is the only living being who is endowed with *logos*, he is the only one that can let other forms of life appear in his perspective by bringing them to the word, by letting them "speak". This is somewhat echoed in Heidegger's sentiment in 1924, when he speaks about the ultimate *telos* of man's practical life:

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[41] Agamben (2004, 16).

[42] Dombrowski (1994) and Glendinning (1996) *versus* Schalow (2006) can be considered representative of the opposition between anthropocentric and anti-anthropocentric reading of Heidegger.

[43] E. g. the case of the *De Motu Animalium*, in which the eminent case of movement, according to the premises of the work, could be considered the perfect living being, i.e. the divine. On the possibility of a "multicentric" approach of Aristotle, according to the various domains of his investigations, see Nussbaum (1986, xv).

In this way, it appears that the *ergon* of human beings is *praktike zoe*. Thus, as the *telos* of human beings does not lie outside itself but rather in itself as its being-possibility, the *athropinon agathon* is *zoe itself* -"living" itself. The *ergon* is living itself, which is apprehended in the sense of being-in-the-world *meta logou*, in such a way that it is thereby spoken.[44]

Consequently, by mixing the Heideggerian with the Aristotelian perspective, a man could be construed as a living being who, endowed with language, intelligence and morality, always needs to refer to something else to conduct his own life. Furthermore, he can extend this ability to take into account potentially *any* form of life he can recognize, as a partner in his individual action. This should authorize him, as if were, to speak "for" the whole of life,[45] i.e. for the varieties of life that he can bring into word according to the many possible usages of his *logos*. This also could mean that the basic function of *logos* would be to make something "be" by bringing it into word, thus establishing a connection between the various forms of human language, from a scientific discourse to poetical utterance.

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[44] Heidegger (2009, 69).

[45] On this, see the chapter «Who speaks for the Animals?» in (2006, 103).

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From Fixing to Thinking: Martin Heidegger's Contribution to Medical Cares

Francesca Brencio

> *«What makes one heroic? - To approach at the same time one's*
> *highest suffering and one's highest hope».*
> *F. Nietzsche, The Gay Science*

Abstract This paper aims to pursue two goals: first, it will explore the encounter and dialogue between Martin Heidegger's thinking toward medicine, and in particular, psychiatry. Second, it will look toward understanding how this encounter can illuminate clinical practices and provide significant contributions within the fields of medical education and healthcare. The broader horizon of this paper is to underline how embracing a different approach to health can be of interest to both a medical and philosophical audience, inviting the former to progress in their scientific skills and de-personalize texts toward a more genuine and humanistic encounter with patients, while also engendering the latter to leave the dark and dusty halls of metaphysical thinking to move into the greener pastures of the social dimension.

Keywords Heidegger · Medicine · Psychiatry · Clinical encounter · Daseinsanalyse

1 Introduction

This essay intends to pursue two aims: first, it will explore the encounter and dialogue between Martin Heidegger's thinking toward medicine, and in particular, psychiatry. Second, this essay will look toward understanding how this encounter can illuminate clinical practices and provide significant contributions within the fields of medical education and healthcare. As suggested by the title, this paper is of

F. Brencio (✉)
Department of Philosophy, University of Seville, Seville, Spain
e-mail: fbrencio@us.es

the position that every science that deals with human being in its totality, such as medicine in all its specializations, should not approach the matter with the idea of *fixing* something that is broken within people, but rather look towards the *thinking* which guides that methodology in itself. Instead of considering the person in question as something broken that requires fixing, what it is required is rather an *understanding of* every human through the light of *thinking*. Through the use of an appropriate theoretical framework, we will shed light on the interpretative efforts that have been used to understand the complex constitution of human being, particularly when this nature is undermined by illness and can affect existence.

Indeed, phenomenology can provide significant contributions in setting up this theoretical framework. Phenomenology here refers to the approach of understanding one's lived-in experience. This theoretical framework will seek to expand the phenomenological approach through psychopathology: a phenomenology that rejects aspirations to apodictic certainty in favor of a humbler understanding of the nature of the phenomenological enterprise. - i.e., as an enterprise that requires interpretation rather than an infallible description,[1] which will resultantly show itself only as a method for ontology. The method of applying phenomenology to psychopathology implies a new understanding of psychopathological phenomena that can be conceived as

> a coherent way of being in the world. The scope of clinical phenomenology is neither just to unfold the phenomena that are present in the experiential field of a specific person, nor to select symptoms in view of a nosographical diagnosis. These are the tasks of descriptive and clinical psychopathologies respectively. Rather, it aims to recover the underlying characteristic modification that keeps the manifold of phenomena meaningfully interconnected in the life-world of the person.[2]

The so-called *meditative thinking* [*Besinnung*] inaugurated by Martin Heidegger fits into this approach by exercising phenomenology. Far from both anthropology and psychoanalysis, this new paradigm begins with the analysis of human being's existence in *Being and Time* and moves forward to the critique to science and technology grounded on the presumption of *truth* in the terms of measurability and exactness. He clearly distinguishes his existential analytics from the fields of Anthropology, Psychology, and Biology, which leads him to his own interpretation of fundamental ontology and shows why the so-called 'meditative thinking' cannot be reduced to any of these approaches.[3] Indeed, his contribution to phenomenology lies particularly in his attention to the understanding of emotions and moods, and the ability to draw some key concepts of *Dasein*'s constitution, such as *Befindlichkeit*[4]; in fact,

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[1] See D. Zahavi, J. Parnass, T. Saas, *Phenomenological Psychopathology and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Approaches and Misunderstandings*, in "Philosophy, Psychiatry, Psychology", Vol. 18, No. 1 / March 2011, p. 7.

[2] G. Stanghellini, R. Rosfort, *Emotions and Personhood. Exploring Fragility - Making Sense of Vulnerability*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, p. 225.

[3] See M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, Northwestern University Press: Evanston, 2001, p. 307.

[4] See F. Brencio, *Befindlichkeit: Disposition* in *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenological*

whereas Husserl had put aside questions about ontology and metaphysics, Heidegger made these questions the foundation for his investigation of human experience and action. This has been characterised as a shift from reflective to hermeneutical phenomenology: where the former confined itself to clarifying the experiential structures of subjectivity, the latter went a step further (or a step backwards) and asked, how are we to understand (i.e. interpret), evaluate, and finally act on what we experience. This ontological shift introduced questions into the phenomenological investigation. Questions which Husserl did his best to keep out of what he considered to be serious scientific phenomenology, in particular, questions of ontology and normativity. Heidegger does not just ask what and how we experience, but also how we feel about our experiences. Furthermore, the question of how we feel inevitably entails further questions about the nature of our feelings (ontology) and what we should do about them (normativity).[5]

Certainly, Martin Heidegger has not been the only philosopher of the twentieth century to devote his efforts toward the understanding of human being under a new light and similarly not the only one to propose novel approaches to medicine. However, if we consider his education – essentially theological and philosophical-based, and not medical in *any sense* - we would be unable to recognize the merit of discussing his meditation within the context of fundamental issues of western science and its implication in the well-being of humans.

Firstly, we will see that when approached through a different paradigm, healthcare and medical education can contribute to a new interpretation of illness, relations, narratives and services. Secondly, we will discuss how the consequences that affect both personal and social dimensions can change. Finally, we will look at how the metaphysical structure in which the western approach to medicine is grounded, along with how it should be put into discussion, setting human beings free from all the categories that, instead of enhancing their ability to live, decide, and act freely, inhibits these activities and attitudes. By the end of this paper, it will be clear that embracing a different approach to humans - and consequently to health - can be of interest to both medical and philosophical audience, inviting the former to progress in their scientific skills and de-personalize texts toward a more genuine and humanistic encounter with patients, while also engendering the latter to leave the dark and dusty halls of metaphysical thinking to move into the greener pastures of the social dimension. Moreover, at the core of this approach stands an important need to fill the gap between academics and practitioners. Those who are familiar with medical humanities and cross borders frequently between disciplines know exactly how difficult is to put these two groups in a dialogue due to their education, their respective public – students and academics for the first group, patients and other practitioners for the second – and their specific focuses – with the former, providing education and increasing publications, on the other hand curing people and exchanging clinical experiences. Nevertheless, academics and practitioners need to be in dialogue because they share common, essential values: the understanding of and caring for

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Psychopathology, ed. by G. Stanghellini, A. Raballo, M. Broome, A. V. Fernandez, P. Fusar-Poli, R. Rosfort., Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019, pp. 344-353.

[5] G. Stanghellini, R. Rosfort, *Emotions and Personhood. Exploring Fragility - Making Sense of Vulnerability*, p. 206.

people. As with every field of research and knowledge, the notion of being in dialogue means not merely finding appropriate occasions to talk *to* each other but also to find a common language in which words can *show* relations and are not used to *signify* objects, since «in the field of human behaviour (…) language reveals constitutive practices, intentions, and orientations towards life that have the status of reality for people».[6]

2   Philosophy and Medicine in Dialogue

The issue of a dialogue, in terms of the dialogue itself, is of interest not only in the fields of medicine and philosophy but would also be essential in the context of clinical practices.[7] Our inherent ability to speak and listen are fundamental features of being not just simply getting *into* a dialogue with each other, but to *be* in a dialogue. Each of us is able to have a dialogue with everybody but *being* in a dialogue is something more: it is not simply a verbal exchange of different information, or be construed as a conversation or discussion. Rather, it is an experience that reminds us of the transcendental constitution of each of us. In Gadamer's view, «dialogue is what we are»[8]: through dialogue, each form of existence comes into the light together with the world we live in. Dialogue is what situates us in a world that is inhabited by alterity, and in a particular time, it is what allows us to tell our personal story. Dialogue is composed of words and silence, an experience familiar to each of us, but it is also made up of symptoms: they are not simply the causes of illness, but stand as a kind of language through which illness shapes its own language on various levels; they are phenomena that request to be investigated. Dialogue in a clinical context is the basic moment of each intervention and encounter. Contrary to the way in which psychiatry and psychology are practiced - i.e. through a biological approach, which is only grounded on the principle of measurement where questionnaires and forms substitute the individual's stories - a genuine and empathic dialogue, which is a phenomenological psychiatry, is oriented through the significative importance assigned to dialogue. According to Kafka's words, «Filling prescriptions is easy, but getting on with people is much harder».[9] Being a dialogue allows patients to talk about their personal stories – that are not simply the story of their

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[6] C. Kong, *Cultural Translation, Human Meaning, and Genes: Why Interpretation Matters in Psychiatric Genomics,* in Frimpong-Mansoh, Yaw A., and Caesar A. Atuire (eds.), *Bioethics in Africa: Theories and Praxis,* Vernon Press, 2019 (forthcoming).

[7] See G. Stanghellini, *Lost in dialogue,* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017.
    On this topic, I would recommend also A. T. Tymieniecka, E. Agazzi (eds.), *Life. Interpretation and the sense of illness within the human condition. Medicine and Philosophy in a Dialogue*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 2001.

[8] H. G. Gadamer, *The Enigma of Health*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996, p. 166.

[9] F. Kafka, *A Country doctor*, full text in https://thespace.lrb.co.uk/article/a-country-doctor-by-franz-kafka-translated-by-michael-hofmann/

illness but also the story of their lives – and to frame their narratives by providing significant contributions to the so-called 'narrative medicine'. Words introduce each practitioner and clinician in the patient's world that expresses a way of thinking in which existence shows itself.

The dialogue between two different – and yet similar – branches of knowledge, such as medicine and philosophy, is not something new in the history of ideas. Conversely, it has been lost through the modern approach to science and the human being. If we go back to the ancient Latin etymology, *Medicare* and *Meditare* are not merely verbs that share a common prefix (from the ancient Avestan language: *mad, madh-*). Instead, they designate practices and actions that have something in common, such as taking care of the human body and mind. Even if the bond between philosophy and health disciplines was been established long ago, it has lost its bite since the seventeenth century. Since the end of 1600, science has often built a paradigm of truth in terms of measurability, calculations, and projections: fostering that view, only what can be proved through numbers is *effective* and, as such, *true*. Physicians have not been questioning the prevailing view of medicine as a branch of applied biology, as it has been the customary method in which medical care and practices is performed within. Science, through being so concerned with the discovery of its power to invent, to explore, to cure, has, to some extent, forgotten its relationship with the human being. If modern science has changed the way we see the world today, it has also changed the way we see ourselves as human beings, and as a "whole": we begin to increasingly see ourselves as something that is made up of parts to be repaired, fixed or changed. This has been one of the most influential concepts that has pushed thinkers, such as Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Hans Jonas, Herbert Marcuse (just to mention few philosophers of this view) to criticize the technological revolution of the twentieth century and the improper use of science, medicine and mental health disciplines. Beginning from the peculiarity of their approach to this criticism, they underlined the importance of our finality, in order to understand our *ways of being* and *forms of existence*.

Indeed, their critique of modern society is based on a reflection of subjectivity. Since the twentieth century, the focus on subjectivity has always accompanied complex and contradictory changes that are wrought by 'modernity': the rapid expansion of capitalism, the emergence of modern individualism, the growing success of the scientific method in manipulating nature for human ends, and the decline of traditional and theologically-legitimated authorities. Heidegger's and Jaspers' critique of the modern notion of subjectivity lies in the view that it is not a mere philosophical quibble, but an intervention of how we conceptualize ourselves in the present and make use of science. The risks of an improper use of the medical sciences increase as we lose the idea of the human being *as such* and this can irreversibly affect both our lives and life in general. As Hans Jonas has demonstrated,[10] it is not possible confront the usage of modern technology - with the manipulation of

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[10] See H. Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: The Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1984.

DNA, with all the ethical issue that stems from cloning or pertaining to our personal responsibility toward the entire biosphere – without recalling the ethical responsibility that this usage implies. This responsibility addresses mankind and its global control over an improper use of technological and its material development since it affects life in every form.

In recent years, this critique of science has become an interdisciplinary dialogue that has been aimed toward discovering the benefits of understanding the human being in all its complexity. This interdisciplinary dialogue begun approximately at the beginning of twentieth century, when certain branches of medicine and human sciences examined their practices and came to acknowledge the contributions of other intellectual and disciplinary resources. An example is offered by psychiatry, a field that has been primarily seen as being concerned with the overcoming mental disorders, or broadly, as a field with interest in health and human fulfillment. In the last few decades, there has been a shift of this view toward a position that puts the specialization in relation to other spheres of human life such as ethics, law, religion, arts, and so on. Since the Enlightenment, the traditional approach to health and illness has been strongly influenced by the realm of natural sciences. Many therapists and theorists have become dissatisfied with the theoretical framework that is offered by traditional psychiatry and traditional medical paradigms in general. As such, they found alternative conceptual frameworks in philosophy.[11] The general dissatisfaction with the treatments and results stem from two main reasons: 1) beyond the diagnosis, the method of applying natural sciences to mental illness loses sight of the human being as a whole; 2) the method of applying natural sciences to mental illness is not concerned with the inner experience that might be affected the human being's consciousness, suffering, and the treatment that they are undergoing. Consequently, with the new approach, mental illness has begun to be understood in a variety of new ways, both among psychiatric services and in society. For example, models of mental illness are based on biomedical, cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, and social perspectives. These new models lead to new and distinct approaches to classification, explanation, and treatment. They influence the focus

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[11] On this important and broad topic, see K.W.M. Fulford, G. Stanghellini, M. Broome, *What can philosophy do for psychiatry?*, in "World Psychiatry" 2004, 3(3), pp. 130–135; J. Radden J., *The philosophy of psychiatry: a companion*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2004; K. W. M. Fulford, et al. (eds.), *Nature and narrative: an introduction to the new philosophy of psychiatry*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003; K. W. M. Fulford, et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychiatry*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001; J. Parnas, D. Zahavi., *The link: Philosophy-psychopathology-phenomenology,* in D. Zahavi (Ed.), *Exploring the self. Advances in Consciousness Research*, John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 2000; F. Svenaeus, *The Hermeneutics of Medicine and the Phenomenology of Health. Steps Towards a Philosophy of Medical Practice,* Springer 2000; H. W. Cohn, *Existential Thought and Therapeutic Practice An Introduction to Existential Psychotherapy*, SAGE Publications: London, 1997; K. Arens, *Wilhelm Griesinger: Psychiatry between philosophy and praxis*, in "Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology", 1996, 3, pp. 147-64; J. Z. Sadler, O. P. Wiggins, M. A. Schwartz (eds.) *Philosophical perspectives on psychiatric diagnostic classification*, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1994; H. Spiegelberg, *Phenomenology in psychology and psychiatry. A historical introduction*, Northwestern University Press: Evanston, 1972.

and methods of research (for example, as to whether biological or social research is more likely to reveal the causes of schizophrenia) and the significance of 'symptoms'. Furthermore, some accounts of mental illness explicitly criticize medical or psychiatric models; for example, this would include the notion of mental illness, which is considered as «a 'myth' based on a mistaken analogy between physical illness and psychological distress»,[12] or the notion that psychiatric categories and their practices are the product of a wider world-view and reflect the interests of society at large.[13] From this perspective, philosophy can provide a significant contribution in defining the focus and limitations of medicine while recognizing Heidegger's meditation is an effective tool, among others, that can be used to shed light on this approach.

3   Heidegger's Critique of Science and Biology

For over twenty years, Heidegger wrote extensively about his critique of science, one of the most intriguing topics that cut across his meditation.[14] Indeed, it would be fair to say that he was not the only one to head down this path, as since the seventeenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, other authors, such as Dilthey, Weber or Jaspers has recognized the incommensurability of methodologies that are typical of natural and human sciences. However, Heidegger's critique of science plays an important role as a critique of metaphysics. As pointed out by William J. Richardson, «his most explicit analysis of the nature of science occurs in an address he delivered in Freiburg in 1938 to a group of scientists, doctors and art-historians. (…) Heidegger's critique of the science is inseparable from (…) his interpretation of the fundamental nature of modern time as such».[15] Scientific method is thus viewed as a manifestation of the relationship scientists have with all the beings in the world, and is one that is grounded on measurability and objectification: «In today's science we find the desire to have nature at one's disposal, to make it useful, to be able to calculate it in advance, to predetermine how the process of

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[12] T. S. Szasz, *The myth of mental illness*, in "American Psychologist", 1960, 15, pp. 113–118.

[13] See M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Tavistock: London, 1971; A. V. Horwitz., *Creating Mental Illness,* Chicago University Press: Chicago, 2002.

[14] The critical literature on this topic is very broad. I refer the reader to the pivotal studies that have contributed to a better understanding of Heidegger's critique of science and its relations with metaphysics: B. Babich, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Science: Calculation, Thought, and Gelassenheit*, in B. Babich (ed.), *From Phenomenology to Thought, Errancy, and Desire*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995, pp. 589–600; R. Crease, *Heidegger and the Empirical Turn in the Continental Philosophy of Science*, in T. Glazebrook (ed.), *Heidegger on Science*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 225–38; A. J. Wendland, *Heidegger vs. Kuhn: Does Science Think?*, in A. J. Wendland, C. Merwin, and C. Hadjioannou (eds.), *Heidegger on Technology*, NY: Routledge 2019, pp. 282–298.

[15] W. J. Richardson S.J., *Heidegger's critique of Science*, in "The New Scholasticism", 42 (4) 1968, p. 511.

nature occurs so that I can relate to it safely. Safety and certainty are important. There is a claim for certainty in having nature at one's disposal. That which can be calculated in advance and that which is measurable—only that is real».[16]

Indeed, while scientific explanations, measurability, and objectivation are historically results of the application of Galileo's principles to nature and human beings, they are also landmarks for a new way of thinking which is dominating human attitude to think, i.e. calculative thinking; only what can be calculated is worth inquiry, and as such, only what can be measurable would be usable: «One mentions the "rational" and strikes upon that calculating character in everything of the nature of command as it surrounds the dosed circle of the distribution and the steering of forces».[17] In contrast, Heidegger sees science as a metaphysical result in which «the quantitative dominates all beings»[18]; his critique to science is thus a metaphysical one and regards 'thinking' itself, with a critique of scientific objectification in general: «Being "an object" only makes its appearance in modern natural science»[19] and the metaphysical question of being is no longer capable of

> taking itself seriously; that is why it seeks the favour of "sciences" and like them finds salvation in "what is concrete" and "proven", which the metaphysical question of being hands over to itself out of the "live-experience" of "beings". The strange striving for a "real" and a "realistic" "ontology" is not even the end of metaphysics any more, but merely the dying away of a phantom which scholarship has produced out of the scholastic form of metaphysics.[20]

With the provocative dictum "science does not think"[21] (in the sense in which thinkers think), Heidegger sought to stress that every science rests on presuppositions which cannot be established ontologically: in other words, a science that is 'capable of thinking' «would be one which can (1) call into question its ontic presuppositions, and (2) conceptualize the ontological meaning of the objects of inquiry it reflexively constitutes».[22] In *Zollikon Seminars,* it is stated that: «For science the domain of objects is already pregiven. Research goes forward in the same direction in which the respective areas have already been talked about pre-scientifically. These areas belong to the everyday world. (…) The prevailing opinion nowadays is [that it is] as if science alone could provide objective truth. Science is the new religion».[23] In this realm, «all explaining is the denial of what is charged with ground. Sciences confirm and pursue what is groundless in beings».[24]

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[16] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 19.

[17] M. Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, trans. by P. Emad and T. Kalary, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 14.

[18] M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. by P. Emad and K. Maly, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999, p. 108.

[19] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 20.

[20] M. Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, p. 304.

[21] M. Heidegger, *What is called thinking?* (trans. by J. Glenn Gray): NY: Harper & Row, 1968. p. 8

[22] D. Ginev, *The Critique of Biology Implied by The Fundamental Concepts Of Metaphysics*, in "Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual", 8, 2018, p. 71.

[23] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, pp. 17-18.

[24] M. Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, p. 79.

Close to the critique of science, there is the critique of biology[25] that is grounded on the understanding of this discipline - as a theoretical conceptualization of life – in terms of the metaphysics of presence. Heidegger refers to phenomenon of interest in this science and states that «biology knows absolutely nothing» about them[26]:

> As a science, all biology already presupposes a more or less explicitly drawn essential delimitation of appearances that constitute its realm of objects. This realm (…) is that of living beings. Underlying the delimitation of this realm there is again a preconception of what distinguishes and sets apart living beings as such, namely, life. The essential realm in which biology moves can itself never be posited and grounded by biology as a science, but can always only be presupposed, adopted, confirmed.[27]

Biology, as well as other natural sciences, thematizes a given entity that, in a certain manner, is already "disclosed" prior to scientific disclosure: this would be a *positum*, and «we call the sciences of entities as given positive sciences. Their characteristic feature lies in the fact that the objectification of whatever it is that they thematize is oriented directly towards entities, as a continuation of an already existing prescientific attitude towards such entities».[28] On the contrary, ontology demands a different view: one that moves from entities to being. In his critique toward biology, Heidegger «offers an elaborate conception of the living that potentially leads (1) to a substantial revision of basic theoretical concepts of biology, and more importantly, (2) to alternative ways of theorizing in basic biological disciplines»,[29] regardless of whether he was interested in developing this alternative ("ontologically grounded") biological science.

Indeed, it is well-known that the critique of science is followed by the critique of technique, a critique that occupies Heidegger's meditation from the end of the '40s: he begins to be deeply committed in thinking and writing about the essence of technology as a way of revealing being, through its forgetfulness, nihilism, and *Gestell*. The essence of technology is connected to the *Machenschaft* (Machination), that occupies a large part of his reflection both in the *Contribution to Philosophy (From Enowning)* and within the *Black Notebooks*, in which the issues highlighted need to be addressed from a metaphysical point of view, this occurs within the space of western technical rationality. Progress, technicity, and machination are considered particular features of modernity since they do not only conceal the unfolding of the 'ownmost' of being, but restrict the human being into the 'darkest night':

> No prophecy is necessary to recognize that the sciences now will soon be determined by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics. This science corresponds to the

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[25] On this topic see T. Kessel *Phänomenologie des Lebendigen: Heideggers Kritik an den Leitbegriffen der neuzeitlichen Biologie*, Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag, 2011.

[26] M. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. by W. McNeill and N. Walker, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 271.

[27] M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume III, trans. by J. Stambaugh, D. Farrell Krell, and F. Capuzzi, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 41.

[28] M. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. by W. McNeill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.p. 41.

[29] D. Ginev, *The Critique of Biology Implied by The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics,* p. 39.

determination of man as an acting social being. For it is the theory of the steering of the possible planning and arrangement of human labour. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information.[30]

The scientific method inaugurated by modernity does not work with human beings, neither in its definition nor takes into consideration what health and illness might be defined as: «How far can we get with a sick person [with this approach]? We fail totally!».[31] Forasmuch as science has no relationship with *truth* but only with *exactness,* the human being is *ontologically different* from the results that come from the accuracy of being measured or being objectified. Indeed,

> the entire gap between natural science and our consideration of the human being is evident from this factual statement. According to natural science, the human being can be identified only as something present-at-hand in nature. The question arises: Can human nature be found at all in this way? From the projection of the natural sciences, we can see the human being only as an entity of nature, that is, we claim to define the human being's being utilizing a method, never designed to include its special nature. Questions remain as to what takes precedence (…) We ask: (…) Where is its truth? Can it be proved? It cannot be proved. One can only look at the results, at the effects, which can be obtained through the natural sciences as a criterion showing that natural scientific thinking does justice to its domain. Effect is never a proof, much less a criterion for the truth of the method leading to the effect. (…) Of course, the human being can be seen as part of nature in the scientific manner. Yet, the question still remains whether something human will result—something, which relates to the human being as a human being.[32]

It is precisely through recognizing the inadequacy of an application of the scientific method to the human being that Heidegger inaugurates a new and also provocative thinking, one that he calls the meditative thinking. This method of thinking insists on the fact that all the various manifestations of modern psychology are held under the scientific method that reduces human behavior to elemental causal interactions and view emotional suffering from the perspective of detached objectivity, and thus requires a different approach in the understanding of the human being and to issues related to mental health. This approach can be expressed in a formula of sorts: from *homo natura* to *homo existentia*. If *existence* has something to do with the way through which human being has to be, it means that this *modus essendi* has a precise way to also be among people affected by mental disorders. It further means that psychopathological phenomena can be conceived not as something negative compared to the ordinary way of living but as variations (*Abwandlungen*) of the original and sole ontic structure that characterized *existence* in all its expressions. Under this interpretation, the approach proposed by Heidegger toward mental illness can provide a novel paradigm in the understanding of people and provide a substantial contribution toward building relationships, fighting stigma, and destroying boundaries in social contexts:

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[30] M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell (ed.), San Francisco: Harper, 1993, p. 434.

[31] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 19.

[32] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, pp. 26-27.

> Those who take pleasure in such questions may try to figure out which is easier: to be trained in the secure apparatus of a science and to continue working within it, or to listen to the truth of the heart and to simply say it. Where indeed the human being himself, not as a scientific specimen, but as being-there, is to be made the 'object' of questioning, which is what 'psychology' and 'anthropology' claim to do, the kind of research that has been blinded by its own apparatus can indeed always provide a sack of results, yet without giving rise to any insight.[33]

In his *Diary*, Soeren Kierkegaard writes: «Firstly, let's keep clear what it is to be human». This sentence is the main problem of every science that involves human, especially natural sciences, as

> no other epoch has accumulated so great and so varied a store of knowledge concerning man as the present one, no other epoch has succeeded in presenting its knowledge of man so forcibly and so captivatingly as ours, and no other has succeeded in making this knowledge so quickly and so easily accessible. But also, no epoch is less sure of its knowledge of what man is than the present one. In no other epoch has man appeared so mysterious as in ours.[34]

It is precisely through Kierkegaard's quote that the dialogue between philosophy and medicine's needs to be reexamined.

4   Meditative Thinking Approach to Mental Health

The so-called *Daseinsanalytik* (the analysis of *Dasein*) as it is described in the first section of *Being and Time* is a precious insight into understanding the human being and its relationship with alterity. The analysis of *Dasein* is not merely an analysis of the human being, but is rather a radical reorientation of understanding our existence which casts acute light on the epistemological constitution of medicine and in particular, the fields of specialization that focus on mental health. What Heidegger has drawn in his 1927 work, was subsequently developed and deepened in the decade long experience of the Zollikon Seminars, a series of seminars delivered between 1959 and 1969 in front of an audience of doctors, psychiatrists, and analysts in the Zollikon house of Dr. Medard Boss. These seminars were a testament to one of Heidegger's strongest hopes: that there is the possibility to inaugurate a dialogue between a new and alternative thinking – the so-called *meditative thinking,* in contrast to the metaphysical one – and medicine in a dialogue that was able to educate physicians: «There is the highest need for doctors who think and who do not wish to leave the field entirely to scientific technicians».[35] The seminars held in Zollikon were aimed at providing a non-metaphysical foundation – that is: considering

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[33] M. Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance"*, trans. by W. McNeill and J. Ireland, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2018, p. 71.

[34] M. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1965, p. 216.

[35] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 103.

measurability not as the original constitution of medicine, since *truth* and *validity* are different concepts that define different things – to those who worked in the field of mental health. This aim is still one of the strongest hopes of the present times, where people committed to health are often inclined to become "health's book-keeper" instead of "meditative caregivers".

Indeed, the urgency to put medicine and philosophy in dialogue was primarily underlined by Karl Jaspers – a philosopher *and* a psychiatrist – in his revolutionary *General psychopathology*. For Jasper, it was fundamental to restore the dialogue between philosophy and psychiatry, and he also sought to abolish the mind-body dualism,[36] whose importance and consequences had affected the biological approach to psychiatry between the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. This approach, which was largely influenced by Cartesian's philosophy, reduced all psychopathological phenomena to brain afflictions. Jaspers' approach proposed a methodological and epistemological turn: human being as a whole[37] and as such, it had to be understood within the limits of what can be understood, since for him, it was «not only the extra-conscious elements would remain inaccessible to comprehension, but also existential freedom, and thus, personal decisions would stay outside the field of the understandable».[38] The distinction between mind and body, or what he terms a "mere abstraction", does not provide any help in this understanding. Rather, it risks compromising every outcome of this "hermeneutic" attempt.

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach of Heidegger and the descriptive psychology of inner life used by Jaspers teach us that mental phenomena - that has been the focus of psychoanalytic investigation - are not products of isolated intrapsychic mechanisms,[39] but systems constituted by interacting worlds of emotional

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[36] «In every individual event soma and psyche form an inseparable unity. The two stand in mutual reciprocity which shows itself more directly in psychopathology than it does in normal psychology (…). [I]nsight into the aetiology of psychic events cannot be achieved without some knowledge of somatic function, more particularly the physiology of the nervous system. Thus, psychopathology finds in neurology, internal medicine and physiology its most valuable auxiliary sciences. Investigation of somatic function, including the most complex cortical activity, is bound up with investigation of psychic function, and the unity of soma and psyche seems indisputable. Yet we must remember that neither line of enquiry encounters the other so directly that we can speak of some specific psychic event as directly associated with some specific somatic event or of an actual parallelism. The situation is analogous with the exploration of an unknown continent from opposite directions, where the explorers never meet because of the impenetrable country that intervenes. We only know the end links in the chain of causation from soma to psyche and vice versa and from both these terminal points we endeavour to advance», K. Jaspers, *General psychopathology*, trans. by J. Hoenig, M.W. Hamilton, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997 (seventh ed.), pp. 3-4.

[37] «The psychiatrist as a practitioner deals with individuals, with the human being as a whole», K. Jaspers, *General psychopathology*, p. 1.

[38] O. Dörr, *Hermeneutical and Dialectical Thinking in Psychiatry and the Contribution of Karl Jaspers*, in T. Fuchs, T. Breyer, C. Mundt (eds.), *Karl Jaspers' Philosophy and Psychopathology*, Springer: London, 2014, p. 20.

[39] On this topic see M. R. Broome, *Jaspers and Neuroscience*, in G. Stanghellini, T. Fuchs (eds.), *One Century of Karl Jaspers' General Psychopathology*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2013,

experience. Within these systems we relate to our being in the world, with other people, and ourselves. Heidegger and Jaspers thus seek to unify our being as visible against Cartesian dualism through a phenomenological approach to the human being. They insist that philosophy should also investigate psychopathology in the light of our finality and the constant threat of losing our freedom. Using Heidegger's words, «the human being cannot be subdivided into parts, one that is a part of nature and the other, the more central one, that is not a part of nature. For how could two such heterogeneous things be brought together and be mutually influenced by each other? ».[40]

This question is posed in the context of Zollikon seminars, where all the participants were physicians, psychiatrists, or psychologists with varying amounts of philosophical education. Each year, from the beginning of 1959 to 1969, Heidegger devoted his time and energy to "educate" fifty to seventy participants within the Medard Boss' house in Zollikon, two to three times each semester. He spent three hours, two evenings a week, with the guests, and

> [H]e continued this task for a full decade within the framework of the Zollikon Seminars, which in the meantime had gained widespread fame. His tireless, unwavering patience and forbearance in carrying out and completing this endeavour to the limits of his physical abilities provided resolute proof of the greatness of Heidegger's concern for his fellow human beings. By displaying this attitude toward our Zollikon circle, he proved that he could not only talk and write about the highest level of human fellowship, but that he was also prepared to live it in an exemplary way. He exemplified selfless, loving *solicitude,* which *leaps ahead* of the other [human being], returning to him his own freedom.[41]

However, there were some interpreters who considered Heidegger *merely* as the "shepherd of Being" instead of a philosopher who took the issue on human being seriously: far from elaborating an anthropology or a psychology that would be able to answer Kant's questions (What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?), Heidegger attempted to bind the thread of philosophy to the questions raised by our age: looking back to the ancient Greeks, questioning Leibniz, Hegel and Nietzsche, he provides the reader – but moreover every human – with some inescapable issues that still needed to be addressed in our time, such as the question of technology, the issue of robotics and genetic engineering, the drama of ecology, the dialogue between philosophy and religion. Even if the knot of metaphysical tradition could not be undone, he indicated certain important pathways that put human being in dialogue with itself and the world. Perhaps Medard Boss' consideration on Heidegger's meditation are still valid:

> it can be hoped that Heidegger's fundamental insights - even in any diluted form - may contribute to the humanization of our world in the most positive sense of the word. In no way does this mean a further "subjectivization" of the human mind as the absolute maker of all. Rather, it means yielding oneself to a love that is granted to the human being's being

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pp. 121-132.

[40] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 28.

[41] M. Boss, *Preface* in M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. XVII.

in all that discloses itself in its being and in all that addresses the human being from the openness of his world.[42]

Following Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, a new clinical approach to mental health was born. Utilizing the expression Daseinsanalysis (or *Daseinsanalyse*, in German), I refer to the phenomenological and existentialist approach to mental health that was developed by Ludwig Binswanger at the end of 1920's. It was only after World War II that a form of Daseinsanalysis which differed from Binswanger evolved in Zurich through the contribution of Medard Boss, who preferred to employ the word *Daseinsanalytik* in order to differentiate his approach from Binswanger's variant. Ludwig Binswanger and Medard Boss developed an existential-phenomenological approach toward mental health, based on Heidegger's philosophy.

Binswanger's first contact with Heidegger was through *Being and Time.* It was only in 1929 that a personal encounter between the individuals occurred during the lecture held by Heidegger in Frankfurt, which Binswanger attended. The psychiatrist attempted to combine his field of research with the main insights of Heidegger's Daseinsanalyse, yet provoking Heidegger's objections on several points. It was Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world that solved the problem of the relationship between temporality and existence, an aspect in which Binswanger was interested: Heidegger's book showed him how the intentionality of consciousness was grounded in the temporality of human existence. For Binswanger, psychiatry was not merely a matter of treating the insane, the psychotic, and the neurotic, but a personal encounter between the physician and patient in the capacity of both being human beings. For this reason, psychiatry required the understanding of man in his entirety, with his normal, as well as his abnormal, variations. Binswanger's new approach to mental illness was the result of a continued confrontation between Freudian concepts and the phenomenological explorations of Husserl and Heidegger. In the 1949 essay entitled *Die Bedeutung der Daseinsanalytik Martin Heidegger,*[43] the close analysis of Heidegger's positions allowed Binswanger to clarify that one of the merits of Heidegger's understanding of human being was the deletion of the dichotomy between subject (man, person) and object (thing, environment) and to have replaced the unity of existence and 'world', secured by transcendence: «Through the concept of being-in-the-world as transcendence has the fatal defect of all psychology been overcome and the road cleared for anthropology, the fatal defect being the theory of a dichotomy of world into subject and object».[44] According to the Swiss psychiatrist, Heidegger has elucidated the structure of subjectivity as transcendence, a clarification that also held important consequences in his interpretation of psychosis:

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[42] M. Boss, *Preface* in M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. XXI.

[43] See L. Binswanger, *Die Bedeutung der Daseinsanalytik Martin Heideggers*, in L. Binswanger (ed.), *Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Bern: Francke, 1955, pp. 264-278.

[44] L. Binswanger, *Existential analysis and psychotherapy*, in F. Fromm-Reichmann & J. L. Moreno (Eds.), *Progress in psychotherapy*, NY: Grune and Stratton, 1956, p. 193.

> We realize that by investigating the structure of being-in-the-world we can also approach and explore psychoses (…) understanding them as specific modes of transcending. In this context we do not say: mental illnesses are diseases of the brain (which, of course, they remain from a medical-clinical viewpoint). But we say: in the mental diseases we face modifications of the fundamental or essential structure and of the structural links of being-in-the-world as transcendence.[45]

For Binswanger, existential analysis does not propose an ontological thesis about an essential condition determining existence, rather «makes ontic statements - that is statements of factual findings, about actually appearing forms and configurations of existence. In this sense, existential analysis is an empirical science with its own method and particular ideal of exactness, namely with the method and the ideal of exactness of the phenomenological empirical sciences».[46]

Similar to Binswanger's experience, we find Medard Boss. Medard Boss was a psychoanalyst and physician inspired by the existential-phenomenological philosophy of Martin Heidegger. He set himself the ambitious task of humanizing medicine and psychology from a new existential foundation. Boss, a student of Freud, did not want to do away with the valuable insights of medicine and psychiatry, but rather felt that there was a need to show how the current, modern theoretical presuppositions of medicine and psychiatry were built on faulty theoretical grounds. This was not so much an application of Heidegger's ontology, rather the use of it as a foundational springboard. Through this, Boss felt that psychology and medicine would allow for a place of theory and practice that would do greater justice to the human.

Dissatisfied with Binswanger's therapeutic approach, Medard Boss contacted Heidegger in 1947 to solicit help in providing a proper philosophical foundation for therapy; after initial communications through an exchange of letters, they developed a lifelong friendship. Boss' form of Daseinsanalysis enjoyed the full support of Heidegger, who proofread and corrected Boss' major texts, and argued that Boss' work *Existential Foundations in Medicine and Psychology*[47] articulated a crucial response to scientific thinking within the discipline of psychology. Perhaps the most evident difference between Binswanger's and Boss' works was in this point: for Boss, the emphasis was on world as the possibility for being (*das Seiende*) to show itself as being (*Seiendes*) and be perceived as such by us. When Boss discusses illnesses, he does not distinguish between physical and mental impairment. All disturbances are seen as a restriction of our ability to reach from our ontic individuality to our ontological concerns with aspects of being. On the other side, Binswanger interprets mental disorders as multiple possible modes of declination of the being-in-the-world through employing the concepts of the Daseinsanalyse (such as being-in-the-world; being-toward-death; fear; angst, and so on) that was presented by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*; symptoms are taken not only as signs of dysfunction, but primarily as the key to allowing access to the specific mode of being in the world

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[45] L. Binswanger, *Existential analysis and psychotherapy*, p. 194.

[46] L. Binswanger, *Existential analysis and psychotherapy*, p. 196.

[47] See M. Boss, *Existential foundations of medicine and psychology*, Northvale: J. Aronson Press, 1977.

of the patient, thereby disclosing its project, and constitutive norms.[48] Both experiences – by Binswanger and Boss – gave birth to the so-called existential analysis approach to mental health that has influenced both practices and theories in the field of healthcare.

5   Healthcare and Medical Education: Thinking Not Fixing

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the data of people diagnosed with mental illness are quite extreme: globally, 300 million people are affected by depression, approximately 60 million people have bipolar affective disorders, nearly 23 million people have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, and around 50 million people suffer from dementia. Health systems have yet to be able to adequately respond to the burden of mental disorders. As a consequence, the gap between those in need of treatment and those with the availability for treatment is wide throughout the world. In low- and middle-income countries, between 76% and 85% of people with mental disorders receive no treatment for their disorder, while in high-income countries, between 35% and 50% of people with mental disorders are in the same situation. A further problem that compounds the situation is the poor quality of care that affects those who do receive treatment. In addition to support from healthcare services, people with mental illness also require social support and care. They often need help in accessing educational programs which fit their needs, along with assistance in finding employment and housing which enable them to live and be active in their local communities.[49]

Mental health has long been hidden behind a curtain of stigma and discrimination and has only come to the forefront of discussions in recent decades. Contributions from medical humanities, particularly from the field of mental health, have shed light on mental illness diagnosis. In fact, we find that psychiatry is getting increasingly engaged in making and reinventing its epistemological status, enhancing its ability to formulate diagnosis, explore, and expand the views of human health. Furthermore, the criticisms raised by philosophers, psychiatrists, and sociologists regarding the development of the need for a new awareness around mental hospitals have been an important topic of discussion across Europe. These discussions include efforts to dismantle institutions in which people affected by mental diagnosis were confined and often deprived the dignity (and rights) of a human being.

How can Heidegger's meditation fit into this context and how can meditative thinking provide a significant contribution both in the field of medical education and in medical care? I will look to addressing these questions from a philosophical perspective. The work on the fundamental structures of *Dasein* may help psychiatrists,

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[48] See F. Brencio, *Heidegger and Binswanger: just a misunderstanding?* in "The Humanistic Psychologist", vol. 43, 3, 2015, pp. 278-296.

[49] Data released on April ninth, 2018 - http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders

psychologists and therapists – all of whom come from different schools and with different theoretical orientations - in offering a new approach to understanding the human being, its vulnerability, and the possibility of recovery. Hermeneutics and phenomenology can also contribute to a better understanding of ourselves, of our relationship with therapists, and with illness itself. Heidegger's understanding of the human being thus allows us to not only overcome Cartesian dualism (the mind is isolated from the world in which it physically lives in and mind and world are seen as separated) but also the traditional Freudian theory that is based on the Cartesian idea of isolated minds which process the experiential world into inner and outer spaces.

Considering all these aspects, I am inclined to state that Heidegger's meditation in the field of medicine can be considered an important tool in the redefining of the map of human vulnerability and finality. His attention to the relationship between illness and freedom is a robust argument in this re-description, and it is consistent with his criticism of natural approach to mental health:

> As to the physician's will-to-help [the patient]: One must pay attention to the fact that it always involves a way of existing and not the functioning of something. If one only aims at the latter, then one does not add to [the understanding] of *Dasein*. But this is the goal. The human being is essentially in need of help because he is always in danger of losing himself and of not coming to grips with himself. This danger is connected with the human being's freedom. The entire question of the human being's capacity for being ill is connected with the imperfection of his unfolding essence. Each illness is a loss of freedom, a constriction of the possibility for living.[50]

When Heidegger refers to freedom, he is not referring to a particular capacity to be free or have access to some specific rights. Rather, it is in reference to an ontological feature that allows human being to be free, which is «to be free and open for being claimed by something».[51] The human's attitude to its existence is something inherent to its freedom: there is not freedom *from* conditions, but freedom *toward* conditions and illness (or a mental health diagnosis) is always one important condition among many others. This freedom – understood phenomenologically – has nothing to do with causality. Rather, it has to do with openness and transcendence: «One must abandon the belief that only what can be proved is true. There are matters like presence [of being] or freedom refusing any claim of measurability. We are not dealing with a theory here, but with the insight into what we ourselves always already are»[52] .

Heidegger's legacy reveals the risk for health professions in continuing to 'misinterpret' human beings as either a masterful, subjective consciousness or a quantifiable, causally determined object. Medicine is also asked to acknowledge the ontological fact that the self is always "being-in-the-world" and it is this ongoing involvement in the world that makes possible the modern interpretation of the self. This is why understanding human existence in terms of Dasein can be so helpful to

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[50] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 157.

[51] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 217.

[52] M. Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*, p. 217.

health professionals: «With Heidegger, the world is not interpreted as a container filled with objects within which the self resides. Rather, it is a meaningful nexus of social relations, and the human being is already concretely involved with and embedded in this nexus».[53] Perhaps it could be said that Heidegger's project opens up the possibility for health professionals to broaden their approach to treatment by incorporating wide-ranging historical and cultural understanding of individual pathologies. His analysis of *Dasein* may give psychiatry and psychology their most radical reorientations yet by providing a new paradigm for the understanding of the existence of human being without sweeping what is usually demonized by society under the proverbial carpet. That would mean that medicine can no longer be reduced to a form of praxis focused on healing and fixing. Rather, it should be understood as an inherently thoughtful enterprise, and a form of dialogue that illuminates all existence.

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[53] K. Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body*, SUNY, New York, 2009, p. 122.

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Part III
Society

Autopoiesis and *Heteropoiesis* in the Care of the Self. Foucaultian Perspectives on "Being and Time" and "Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy"

Giovanni Gurisatti

Abstract Undoubtedly, in *Being and Time*, Dasein can achieve its authenticity only through an individualizing process, within a reticent solitude, in its own most intimate and "thrown" individuality, as in contrast with the dispersion which characterizes the public dimension. This kind of solipsism which pertains to Dasein has led Franco Volpi to talk of Heidegger's "repressed ethics"; Heidegger, while being completely focused on the *Seinsfrage*, enacts a drastic process of ontologization of Aristotle's ethics and, furthermore, he appears to forget that Dasein eminently belongs to the dimension of koinonia. The extent of the "repression" of the ethics in *Being and Time*, is even more evident especially if we look at Heidegger's lectures *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* of 1924. In these lectures, echoing Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*, the public ethics is considered not only as a "distinctive" dimension of Dasein and *Mitsein*, but it appears to be characterized by the relationship between care/government (*autopoiesis*) of the self and care/government of others (*heteropoiesis*). These are the same notions that find their most important analysis in the late Foucault's studies, which are entirely dedicated to the phenomenon of ethics in the Hellenistic-Roman world.

Keywords Ethics · Rhetoric · Community · Public dimension · Phronesis · Parrhesia

1 Heidegger Between Aristotle and Foucault

As is well known, Franco Volpi's fame as a scholar – tragically and prematurely dead in 2009 at the age of 56 – was primarily due to his work on Heidegger's peculiar relationship to Aristotle, and their inclusion within the frame of the "rehabilitation of practical philosophy". The title of one of his numerous contributions on this

G. Gurisatti (✉)
Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology (FISSPA),
University of Padua, Padua, Italy
e-mail: giovanni.gurisatti@unipd.it

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topic, *'Essere e tempo': una versione dell' 'Etica Nicomachea'?* (trans. *Being and Time. Another Version of Nicomachean Ethics*?)[1] effectively synthesizes an idea that generated great interest and was enthusiastically welcomed by the scientific community – although without assuming an apologetic tone. In fact, as early as 1996, in an article with a very eloquent title, "*L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*" (trans. *Heidegger's repressed Ethics*),[2] whilst restating his main thesis – primarily the priority (not in Aristotelian terms) of *praxis* over *theoria* – Volpi critiqued Heidegger's repression of some fundamental elements of Aristotle's ethics in his philosophy, which Heidegger achieved through a radical "ontologizing" (and "theoreticizing") process of the Aristotelian categories. "Heidegger", Volpi writes,

> has always privileged the ontological questions over those of "practical philosophy" and, coherently, has always been focused on the only question – that he always claimed as his own – of the meaning of Being […]. The "ontologization" of *praxis* causes […] the dissolution of its very meaning as action, as well as the loss of those central features that Aristotle ascribed to it, especially its origin within the horizon of *koinonia*. Heidegger's ontologization encloses *praxis* within a solipsistic horizon, which consequently distorts its practical and political character.[3]

Unfortunately, Volpi did not have the time for a more in-depth focus on Heidegger's 1924 lectures on the *Basic Concept of Aristotelian Philosophy* – a reading that probably, for reasons that we are going to discuss later, would have softened his opinion of Heidegger's repressed ethics. Hence, from 2003, Volpi was engaged in a very close confrontation with Foucault's late work. In particular, Volpi focused on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, which, although he did not write about it specifically, he dedicated his last university lectures to.[4] In his critical reading of Heidegger and Foucault, Volpi tried to develop a de-theoreticizing and de-ontologizing reading of *Being and Time*, able to retrieve the specific "ethical-practical character" of Dasein – the relationship between the "care to the self", and "care toward others", "government of the self" and "government toward others" – an "ethical-practical character"

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[1] Published in P. Di Giovanni (ed.), *Heidegger e la filosofia pratica*, Flaccovio, Palermo, 1994, 333–69.

[2] F. Volpi, *L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*, in "MicroMega", 2, 1996, 139–63; see also (with some variations),Id., *È ancora possibile un'etica? Heidegger e la 'filosofia pratica'*, in "Acta Philosophica", XI, 2, 2002, 291–313; Id., *Sono ancora possibili un'etica e una politica? Heidegger e la filosofia pratica*, in A. Ardovino (ed.), *Heidegger e gli orizzonti della filosofia pratica*, Guerini, Milano, 2003, 283–306.

[3] F. Volpi, *L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*, cit., 140, 157, 161.

[4] During his teaching of history of philosophy at the University of Padua, Volpi proposed various lectures: 2003/2004: Knowing our self (Schopenhauer) – Authentic and Inauthentic Life (Heidegger) – The Care of the Self (Foucault: *The Hermeneutics of the Subjec*t); 2004/2005: Philosophy of Praxis and Hermeneutics of Facticity (Heidegger) – Aesthetics of Existence (Foucault: *The Use of Pleasure*); 2006/2007: The Metaphysics of Love (Schopenhauer) – The Eros (Marcuse, Evola) – Eros and Technologies of the Self (Foucault: *Will to Knowledge*); 2007–2008: Existential Analytic and Care of the Self: Heidegger (*Being and Time*) and Foucault (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*); 2008–2009: Philosophy as Knowledge and Care of the Self in Plato, Descartes, Foucault (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*; *History of Madness*).

whose hints, according to Volpi, Heidegger not only tried to retract but rather to "systematically cancel" throughout his work after *Sein und Zeit*.[5] We could say that Volpi was forced into changing direction, or better, a *Kehre* in his studies, at least from two perspectives. On the one hand, he had temporarily to "freeze" Aristotle, since for Foucault, "he was no doubt the only philosopher in Antiquity for whom the question of spirituality [namely the care of the self; translator's note] was least important."[6] On the other, Volpi had to re-evaluate *that* specific Hellenistic-Roman, Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, of pivotal importance for Foucault, that for him exactly represented the forgetfulness and abandonment of the genuine "Aristotelian idea of practical philosophy".[7] Hence, in 2006, Volpi had to admit that the "history of the wisdom of life and care of the self", developed by Hadot and Foucault, through considering the ancient Hellenistic and Roman world, tackles very important and, "essential parts of philosophy, conceived of as 'practical philosophy'".[8]

Thus, we may ask ourselves whether and how a "practical", "ethical" and "epimeletical" reading can be applied to Heidegger, especially to *Being and Time* and to his lectures of 1924. Or further, what kind of reading can be offered by late Foucault – considering that he greatly esteemed Heidegger, defining him as "the" most "essential, important and fundamental philosopher" alongside Nietzsche for his own philosophical thought.[9] In fact, as we may read in the first part of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault does not hesitate to include Heidegger among those philosophers that contributed to the Modern re-consideration of the philosophy of the care of the self, as opposed to the Cartesian model, which constituted its crisis.[10]

2   Foucaultian Perspectives – *Pro* and *Contra* – on *Being and Time*

As is well known, in §§ 25–27 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger, inspired by Scheler's analyses, deals with the theme of *Mit-sein* (Being-with), *Mit-dasein* (Dasein-with) and *Miteinandersein* (Being-together-with-others), namely the public dimension, and mainly considers it in a negative light. Once we ascertain that the world "is

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[5] F. Volpi, *L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*, 150.

[6] M. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 17 and see also, *ivi*, 190. (from now on HS).

[7] See F. Volpi, *Che cosa significa 'filosofia pratica'? Per una storia del concetto*, (trans. *What is the Meaning of "Practical Philosophy"? A History of the Concept*), in "Paradigmi", XIX, 57, 2001, 596–97.

[8] F. Volpi, *Quando il Nilo sta arrivando al Cairo*, (trans. "The Nile has reached Cairo") in A. Schopenhauer, *L'arte di invecchiare, ovvero 'Senilia'*, trans. it. G. Gurisatti, Adelphi, Milano, 2006, 20.

[9] See, M. Foucault, *The Return of Morality*, in Id., *Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and Other Writings*, 1978–1985, Routledge, London, 1988, 250.

[10] See, HS, 28 and 189, where Foucault tells us that he has tried to reflect on the relationship of the subject to the truth "from the side of Heidegger and starting from Heidegger."

always the one that I share with Others" and "Being-in is Being-with Others" or, in short, that "Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with",[11] we can see that *proximally and for the most part* Being-with can be given on two different levels. On the individual level, Being-with is given in the deficient modes of passing one another by, being indifferent and alien towards one another, while on the collective and public level – dominated by the dictatorship of *das Man* (the "they", the "One") – it falls also into the deficient mode of subjection, averageness, levelling down, loss of judgement, resolution and answerability.[12] In this *Befindlichkeit and Geworfenheit* within the public sphere (or *doxa* as "the dominant interpretation" of idle talk), the simple *benommen*[13] Dasein feels at home and lives in a certain sense of tranquillity. Conversely, the "distinctive" Dasein finds itself *unheimlich*, feeling not-at-home and discomfited, experiencing depression, uncanniness and anxiety. Thus, the "rare", "privileged" Kierkegaardian Dasein experiences the public sphere as a loss, dispersion, falling and fleeting in face of its own self, while in anxiety, it feels the need to find again and turn back to its own self, enacting an *Um-kehrung* (conversion) from the they-self to its authentic Self:

> The Self of everyday Dasein is the they-self, which we distinguish from the authentic Self – that is, from the Self which has been taken of in its own way. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the "they" and must first find itself. [14]

This situation is the same as described by Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Self*, where dealing with the question of the "Other, of other people, of the relationship to the Other"[15] and following Seneca's *Letter* 52 to Lucilius and *De tranquillitate animi* (*to Sereno*), he makes the distinction – similarly to Heidegger – between *stultus* and *sapiens*. The *stultus* is a Dasein that "has not cared for himself", someone who is blown by the wind and lets all representations (*doxa* and idle talk) from the outside world, who is open to all his passions (*pathe*, *Befindlichkeit*), and in his *Geworfenheit,* cannot make any discrimination (he follows the *Man*). The *stultus* is "dispersed over time", he "lets his life pass by" and "does not try to restore unity to his life";[16] he is always distracted, lazy, inert within the *incuria sui*; briefly speaking, he *is not able to* "will *properly*" and *"freely" his own Self*.[17] *Vice versa*, the *sapiens* is he who, like Lucilius and Sereno, experiences a sort of existential "discomfort"

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[11] See, M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Blackwell, Oxford, 1985, 155 and 156 (from now on BT).

[12] See, *ivi*, 163 and ff.

[13] See, *ivi*, 149 and 220. This *Benommenheit* "captivation" of the simple human being in the world renders him similar to the "benommen" animal of Heidegger's lecture in 1929–1930 on *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics. World, Finitude, Solitude*, translated by W. McNeil, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1995, 246.

[14] BT, 167.

[15] See, HS, 127.

[16] See, *ivi*, 131.

[17] See, *ivi*, 133: "The *stultus* is essentially someone who does not will, who does not will himself, who does not want the self, whose will is not directed towards the only object one can freely will, absolutely and always, which is oneself."

and anxiety for everything that characterizes the *stultus*. By practising the *cura sui* (the *epimeleia heautou*, the *auto-poiesis*) the *sapiens reclaims its ownedness* (*Eigentlichkeit*)*,* reconquers and returns to his own self; he is then tendentially free-from the subjection given by the public dimension as well as free-for the practice of "selfhood".

> To escape from *stultitia* will be precisely to act so that one can will the self, so that one can will oneself, so that one can strive towards the self as the only object one can will freely, absolutely, and always.[18]

This passage coincides both with the *Zu-sein* ("having-to-be") – for which the individual Dasein decides its own existence, in practical-moral terms, "by taking hold or by neglecting",[19] and the *Sein-können* ("ability-to-be") thanks to which *Dasein* "*can,* in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself", or "it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only 'seem' to do so".[20] For both Heidegger and Foucault, *Eigentlichkeit,* ownedness, can be achieved by converting *Je-Man-igkeit* ("in each case the *Man*") *of incuria sui* into *Je-Mein-igkeit*" ("in each case mine", "mineness") of *Sorge um Sich.*

However, we can already appreciate a problem that unites, but also divides the two authors. In Heidegger, anxiety – the "eminent" *Befindlichkeit of Dasein,* which rescues Dasein from the *stultitia* of the public dimension, to bring it back to *potentia*, to "its Being towards its own-most potentiality-for-being, that is its being-free for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself"[21] – what Foucault would define as *sapientia* and *gaudium* of care and government of the self – brings to a solipsistic result, as opposed to any kind of *Mit-sein*, *Mit-dasein* and *Miteinandersein.* Anxiety "individualizes" and isolates the individual and private Dasein from the collective and public *Mitsein*, and only in this individualization "discloses it as *solus ipse*" in its authentic existential solipsism.[22]

"In anxiety", Heidegger writes,

> There lies the possibility of a disclosure which is quite distinctive; for anxiety individualizes. This individualization brings Dasein back from its falling, and makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its Being.[23]

The next steps towards the "reticent and silent call" – opposed to the "hubbub" of the idle talk, which the conscience addresses to Dasein in its solitude – and, even more, the being-towards-death, which is "essentially anxiety", that claims/individualizes Dasein in itself, radicalize even more the implicit solipsistic presupposition of Heidegger's conception of authenticity:

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[18] *Ibidem.*

[19] See, BT, 33.

[20] *Ivi*, 68.

[21] *Ivi*, 231.

[22] See, *ivi*, 233.

[23] *Ivi*, 235.

(The individualizing) makes manifest that […] all Being-with Others, will fail us when our own-most potentiality-for Being is the issue. […] Dasein is authentically itself in the primordial individualization of the reticent resolution which exacts anxiety of itself.[24]

Undoubtedly, in *Being and Time* Dasein can achieve its authenticity only through an individualizing process, within a reticent solitude, in its own most intimate and "thrown" individuality. The idea of this achievement certainly impressed Volpi and his ethical-political sensitivity and probably led him to turn to Foucault with a very lively interest.

Foucault is indeed fully aware of the ethical danger represented by solipsism (with its correlates: hedonism, aestheticism, narcissism, egoism, dandyism, etc.).[25] In fact, from the very beginning of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, he warns us not to misunderstand the care of self as a sort of mere "moral dandyism", a "fixed aesthetic and individual stage", a "withdrawal of the individual who is unable to hold on to and keep firmly before his eyes, in his grasp and for himself, a collective morality".[26] On the contrary, even if the aesthetics of existence is extremely rare and elitist – beyond the constraints and norms of the public sphere – this does not mean that,

in the practice of the self, someone else, the other, is an indispensable condition for the form that defines this practice to effectively attain and be filled by its object, that is to say, by the self. The other is indispensable for the practice of the self to arrive at the self at which it aims.[27]

These passages – and even more Foucault's reflection on the intimate relationship between care-government of the self and care-government of the others within the dimension of *polis*, community, educational institutions, *oikos*, friendship, relatives, marriage and family–[28] seem directly to "revaluate", so to speak, the determinations of Heidegger's notion of *Miteinandersein*. In *Being and Time,* they are considered positive and essential determinations of Dasein – such as encountering each other, considerateness, forbearance, disclosedness, understanding,[29] all expressions of

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[24] *Ivi*, 308 and 369.

[25] In particular, the accusation of aesthetic "dandyism" had been formulated *post mortem* by Pierre Hadot, one of the most inspiring authors for Foucault's conception of care of the self. See Hadot, *Réflexions sur la notion de 'culture de soi'*, in AA. VV., *Michel Foucault philosophe. Rencontre internationale, Paris, 9, 10, 11 Janvier 1988*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1989, 267; *Philosophy as a Way of Life, Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, translated by M. Chase, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, 211.

[26] HS, 12–13.

[27] *Ivi*, 127. This is a very important topic for a militant and committed author like Foucault. In one of his last interviews, on the 20th of January 1984, he returned to defend the *souci de soi:* once again, he made clear that it should not be misunderstood as a "kind of self-love, a kind of egoism or individual interest in contradiction to the care one must show others or the necessary sacrifice of the self." M. Foucault. *The Ethics of Care of the Self as a practice of Freedom*, in J. W. Bernauer, D. M. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Final Foucault*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1988, 4–5.

[28] See, M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality. Vol. 2*, Penguin, London, 1985,152 and ff; Id., *The Ethics of Care of the Self as a practice of Freedom*, 7 and ff.

[29] See, BT, 156 and 159–160.

Fürsorge as "caring for others"[30] – and they seem perfectly and literally to represent the intertwined relationship between *souci de soi* and *souci des autres*.

> Solicitude [The Care for or of the others] proves to be a state of Dasein's Being – one which, in accordance with its different possibilities, is bound up with its […] authentic Being towards itself. […] Being with Others belongs to the Being of Dasein, which is an issue for Dasein in its very Being. Thus as Being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others.[31]

The last quotation, if compared with the aforementioned fact that Dasein finds its own authentic Self, only when individualized, in reticent solitude, shows us how Heidegger was ascribing an excessively negative assessment to *Mitsein* in favour of the condition of *solus ipse* and, at the same time, how Foucault intended to rebalance the relationship between *Dasein* and *Mitsein*.

The emblem of Foucault's effort is represented by the central role assumed by a specific form of "positive" *Fürsorge* between *Dasein* and *Mitsein* – a relationship that in *Being and Time* is only briefly evoked, remaining essentially undeveloped. In fact, individual *Dasein*, once it has achieved its ownedness and its own-self, through the care of itself, can care of the other either by "leaping in for him", so to speak, and "taking over for the other that with which he is to concern himself" – and by means of this it just "disburdens" the other from responsibilities and transforms him into a "dominated and dependent" *Dasein – or* by giving care "back to him authentically", namely helping "the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to *become free for* it".[32] However, it is evident that this kind of help implies Dasein breaking its solipsistic individualization. In fact, as Heidegger writes in another section:

> Resoluteness, as authentic Being-one's-Self, does not detach Dasein from its world nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating "I". […] Resoluteness […] pushes (the one's Self) into solicitous Being-in-the-world […] Dasein's resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the Others who are with it "be" in their own most potentiality-for-Being […] When Dasein is resolute, it can become the "conscience" of Other. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another.[33]

Rather surprisingly, in these lines we see that the auto-poietic Dasein (caring of the self) is transforming into a hetero-poietic Dasein (caring of the others) in *Miteinandersein* and, in order to help others, it chooses to break its solipsism, and to employ its authentic conscience for the other and care for themselves.

This relational dynamic is what mostly characterizes, in Foucault, the relationship between care of the self and care of the other, and especially the figure of the "parrhesiastic" master whose aim is not to flatter and seduce, but rather educate and

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[30] See, *ivi*, 157.

[31] *Ivi*, 159–160.

[32] *Ivi*, 159.

[33] *Ivi*, 344.

emancipate the other. The master, in fact, does not aim at dominating the others, but rather he acts so that,

> they come to build up a relationship of sovereignty to themselves, with regard to them-selves, typical of the wise and virtuous subject.[34]

The other would reach an "autonomous, independent, full and satisfying" relation-ship to himself only if the final aim of the *Bildung* of *parrhesia* is, "not to keep the person to whom one speaks dependent upon the person who speaks", rather to act "so that at a given moment the person to whom one is speaking finds himself in a situation in which he no longer needs the other's discourse."[35] Caring of the other essentially means caring of his own *freedom* to recover his own authentic Self, turn-ing away from the they-self.

At the same time, however, Dasein, exactly like a master towards his pupils, has also to care that the "care of the self" of the other does not turn into a sort of fetish-ist, solipsistic and narcissistic attachment to its own "Being-I" as mere presence. The transformation of the self into a present *res* would entrap the temporal and dynamic nature of Dasein which is always having-to-be and able-to-be since it is a "self-projective Being towards its ownmost potentiality-for-Being", "Being free for one's ownmost potentiality for-Being", "Being towards one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being".[36] Heidegger is well aware of this risk: in §64 of *Being and Time*, entitled *Care and Selfhood* – a section that indicates Heidegger's turn towards (conceiving) "temporality" as the ontological meaning of Care – we read the expression "care for oneself" "proposed in conformity with the term" "solicitude as Care for Others".[37] Heidegger clarifies the idea that in authentic care, the "I" and the "selfhood" have to be conceived *existentially and not naturalistically*. The "I", of which Dasein cares, does not possess – differently from Descartes and Kant – the determination of being absolute, substantial, stable, permanent and identical, but that of mobility, possibil-ity, temporality, projectuality and historicity. From the theoretical perspective, the naturalistic concept of subject "characterizes not the Selfhood of the *'I' qua* Self, but the self-sameness and steadiness of something that is always present-at-hand",[38] while from the practical perspective, concerning the "I" as a "self-thing" implies a too fugitive, superficial approach to the "I" that, in turn, becomes a mere ontic fetish of itself:

> the Self of the self-forgetful 'I am concerned' shows itself as something simple which is constantly self-same but indefinite and empty. Yet one *is* that with which one concerns oneself.[39]

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[34] HS, 385.

[35] *Ivi*, 379.

[36] See, BT, 236.

[37] *Ivi*, 366.

[38] *Ivi*, 367.

[39] *Ivi*, 368.

Thus, the proper meaning of caring for the "care for the self" of the other is to avoid the false stabilization and reification of the "I", since the Self (and selfhood) is not, "the basis of care as constancy and present at hand".[40] Rather, the self as ability-to-be-one-Self and projection-of-one-Self cannot be reduced or immobilized. From this perspective, the existential "constancy" of the self, in contrast with the naturalistic constancy of the "I", is nothing else than the *constancy of the project*, the *constancy of the inconstancy* of care, which lets the subject be free from every reification within the conquest of its own self: the hermeneutics – mobile, dynamic and temporal – of the subject towards its own self.

Nevertheless, in the light of these "ethical" elements (the care for the self and the care for the others), scattered throughout *Being and Time*, we can appreciate the abyss that separates Heidegger's masterpiece from Foucault's *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. Whilst the auto- and hetero-poietic practices that characterize the *ethos* of the Foucaultian "sage" are determined, embodied, and concrete, those of Heidegger's Dasein appear more indefinite, disembodied and abstract. For Heidegger's Dasein, the possibility of being-ethical lies deliberately in an "existentiell indefiniteness".[41] On this, Heidegger is extremely peremptory:

> In the existential analysis we cannot, in principle, discuss what *Dasein factically* resolves in any particular case. Our investigation excludes even the existential projection of the factical possibilities of existence.[42]

On the level of individual Dasein, the "repression" of ethics is evident. However, as we know, Heidegger gives us some more indications on the issue at stake on the collective level of "historicity", where the relationship between Dasein and *Mitsein* acquires the "public" characteristics of the resoluteness for a "handing down heritage", a tradition, a shared destiny, a community and people.[43]

Certainly, this is the attempt to re-evaluate the *Miteinandersein* as public dimension, by opposing the *ethos* of an authentic community of the people (*Volk*) to the uprooted inauthentic society of the One (or they), but Heidegger does not say anything more on this topic. The fertile idea of a Dasein that "with its authentic Being towards itself" helps the others to "devote themselves to the same affair in common",[44] by assuming the role of "conscience" for the others, and so making them be authentically with one another,[45] remains a marginal and secondary idea in *Being and Time*. This could not have satisfied Volpi and Foucault's "practical" requirements.

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[40] *Ivi*, 369.

[41] *Ivi*, 345.

[42] *Ivi*, 434.

[43] See, *ivi*, 435–436.

[44] *Ivi*, 159.

[45] See, *ivi*, 344.

3   A Step Back Towards *Ethos*: Heidegger's 1924 Lecture on Aristotle

But what would have happened if Volpi had had the chance to make a *Schritt zurück* from *Being and Time* (1927) to *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* (1924)?[46] Most likely, his idea of a "repressed ethics" in Heidegger would at least have been problematically reformulated. And probably in the light of his studies on Foucault. In fact, I think that the "Foucaultian perspectives" – that can be opened up regarding these lectures – are evident, and they allow us to see the extent of the internal change that takes place in those years in Heidegger's path. Whilst in *Being and Time*, the public ethics of *Mitsein*, *Mitdasein* and *Miteinandersein* are presented, as we said, mostly in negative and defective terms (with only some marginal positive elements, as we have highlighted), in the lectures of 1924, the situation appears totally inverted. Following Aristotle's *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics* and, exceptionally, *Rhetoric*, the public dimension, with all its ethical aspects, becomes the "distinctive" dimension able to elucidate the practical characteristics of Dasein – whereas its negative elements remain marginal. In *this* Heidegger, we cannot claim that his "ontologization" of Aristotle's *praxis* causes, "the dissolution of its very meaning as action, as well as the loss of those central features that Aristotle has ascribed to it, and especially its origin within the horizon of *koinonia*".[47] On the contrary, in this lecture, we can appreciate a particularly concrete, embodied, relational, disposed Dasein, *existentially defined* on both the individual and collective level – something that Foucault would have liked. Let us very briefly see why.

Despite the fact that, "the being on which it ultimately depends can, for Dasein, only be its way of being",[48] and that for human beings *eudaimonia* consists of the achievement of *autarkeia*, we have to bear in mind that a human being is a creature that lives in terms of *Miteinandersein* – namely it is a *zoon politikon*. Such self-sufficiency,

> cannot be related to individuals, nor does it apply primarily to those who maintain a solitary life. Instead, being with one's parents, with children, with one's wife, friends, and those who are in the *polis* with one, is implicit in being-there itself.[49]

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[46] Most likely, Volpi would have been the editor, perhaps also the Italian translator, of Heidegger's lecture of the summer semester in 1924 at the Philipps-Universität of Marburg, published in 2002 as vol. XVIII of the *Gesamtausgabe.* His premature death postponed the Italian edition for Adelphi. The translation was published only in 2017 for Adelphi (ed. M. Michalski, ed. it. G. Gurisatti). Despite the fact that Volpi indirectly knew the theme of Heidegger's lecture, he did not have enough time to focus on it and, therefore, to include it properly in his studies.

[47] F. Volpi, *L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*, 161.

[48] M. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of the Aristotelian Philosophy*, translated by R. Metcalf, M. Tanzer, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2009, 65 (from now on BCA). See also, *ivi*, 32, 63, 163–164.

[49] *Ivi*, 66.

Thus, according to Heidegger, echoing Aristotle, the *Miteinandersein* (Being constitutively together with others), which translates the Greek term *koinonia* ("having-with-one-another of something", "community"), represents a "distinctive" (*ausgezeichnet*) possibility for Dasein,[50] since *Mit-sein*, Being-with "is not something that is brought to human beings, but is rather *its* being-possibility".[51]

It follows that "politics", as "knowing-the-way-around the being of human beings in its genuineness" is "ethics",[52] so that "comportment", the distinctive *ethos* of Dasein, lies in public and relational life. Moreover, the fact that the fundamental "way" and "mode" of Dasein is being-one- to-another ("I am" is false –"One is" is true), allows us to find a *positive* meaning of "*Man*" ("the One", "the they") as "this *One* is the *genuine how of everydayness, of average, concrete being-with-one-another*"[53] that opens "the possibility from which a genuine being-with-one-another in determinate modes arises".[54]

Furthermore: within the public dimension *Miteinandersein* and *Sprechendsein*, the determinations of "being-with-one-another" and "speaking-being", are equiprimordial as *speaking-being and being-with-one-another.*[55] Speaking is "in itself, communicating; and, as communication, it is nothing other than *koinonia*",[56] since the *logos*, "is a basic phenomenon of *koinonia*".[57] If we consider all of these premises, then we can conclude that the One, *here manifested as doxa*, acquires an essentially positive nuance, meaning and tone. *Doxa* is the (distinctive) "mode in which the world of being-with-one-another is there"[58] – as speaking, discussing, interacting, expressing its own opinion and taking decisions *together* on which "it could also be otherwise".[59] Discoursing-speaking with one another "belongs to the genuine drive of being of the human being",[60] and only when this *genuine and authentic possibility* of Dasein "ensnares, speaking with one another falls into the dispersive phenomenon of 'idle talk'" that already the Greeks considered "*the basic danger of their being-there* (Dasein)".[61] Only then *doxa*, from being the lively dynamics of public interpretation, acquires "a characteristic authority and stubbornness", which

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[50] See, *ivi*, 35 and 40.

[51] *Ivi*, 40.

[52] See, *ivi*, 48.

[53] *Ivi*, 45.

[54] *Ibidem*. "Therefore, we must keep in view, primarily and constantly, this one as a basic determination of the being of human beings", *ibidem*.

[55] See, *ibidem*.

[56] *Ivi*, 34.

[57] *Ivi*, 94.

[58] *Ibidem*.

[59] *Ivi*, 102.

[60] *Ivi*, 16.

[61] *Ivi*, 74.

consists eminently in randomly repeating others' opinions and "barely living in the averageness of *das Man,* that thereby becomes dangerous".[62]

However, the true "ethical" distinction between *Being and Time* and *Basic Concepts* emerges when Heidegger, surprisingly, in his 1924 lecture, reads Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in relation to *Nicomachean Ethics* and, in his existential and ontological analysis of Dasein, there appears the figure of the "orator-speaker". Given that the dimension of *praxis* of Dasein consists in its being-in-the-world – *koinonia – meta logou, kata logou*, by "speaking" with the others ("the distinctive mode of being in being-with-one-another is in speaking-with-one-another"),[63] then rhetoric is not only strictly related to politics and ethics but also, from an existential-ontological perspective, represents a certain kind of "self-interpretation of Dasein", namely "*Rhetoric is nothing other than the interpretation of concrete being-there, the hermeneutic of being-there itself*".[64] Then, rhetoric, in this lecture, is not thought of as a mere oratorical *techne*, but rather as a proper "hermeneutics of the subject" in which "the subject" is essentially and eminently in a constant interactive relationship to the others: "*interpretation of being-there [Dasein] with regard to the basic possibility of speaking-with-one-another*".[65]

Compared to the individual Dasein of *Being and Time*, which finds its authenticity in its individualization, isolation and reticent solitude, the Dasein-orator of *Basic Concepts* is a human being "that has its genuine being-there in conversation and in discourse".[66] For this very reason, its *praxis* in public life and towards others determines and connotes its "visible" ethos, namely its concrete and psycho-physical being and comportment.[67] Whilst in the case of *episteme – namely* stable and "scientific" knowledge –, it is irrelevant *who has* it or who he/she *is*, in the case of *doxa*, namely an "interpretative" opinion on a changing subject –upon which we need to take an urgent decision – it is essential to be able to *know and see* who has it, who he/she is and to know his/her *ethos*. "Through the discourse itself", Heidegger argues,

> through the manner and mode in which the one who discourses himself speaks, *ethos* must become visible, […]. It is only settled by the manner and mode in which the speaker offers himself […] One's comportment, how one behaves oneself, is the "most excellent" *pistis*.[68]

For example, since the principal aim of the Dasein-orator is to impact on the *pathos* (the *Befindlichkeit)* of those who are listening to him, in order to govern and use it in a proper and rightful way, he has to demonstrate to possess the *hexis*, namely that "composure" necessary to govern and control *his own 'pathe'*, exercising an adequate mastery over them. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault, as a reader of Seneca, presents the phenomenon of *stultitia* as a condition of perpetual

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[62] See, *ivi*, 102 and 187–188.

[63] *Ivi*, 91–92 and 80.

[64] *Ivi*, 75.

[65] *Ivi*, 95.

[66] *Ivi*, 74.

[67] See, *ivi*, 73 and 82.

[68] *Ivi*, 82–83.

restlessness of the soul, and body, typical of that man "passive in relation to himself, unable to exercise *egkrateia,* mastery or sovereignty, over the self"[69] whilst *sapientia* is exactly the opposite.[70] Similarly, for Heidegger as a reader of Aristotle in *Basic Concepts*, the *phronesis* and *arete* of the Dasein-orator lie in the *hexis prohairetike*, namely the possibility of "being-resolved to", being able to resolve oneself in a definite moment, *contra* the overwhelming character of passions:

> That which is grasped in a state of arousal, in blind passion, has little to do with that which is grasped in clear, lucid resolution. […] the manner and mode in which I am resolved, that to which I am resolved, what stands in *prohairesis*, *is decisive for my being*, for the manner and mode in which I am, for my *ethos*.[71]

Here, we find the characteristics of the *ethos* of the Dasein-orator that does not achieve its authenticity in a "mystical", individualized and reticent solipsism, likewise the individual Dasein of *Being and Time*. In *Basic Concepts*, the character of Dasein takes its shape in the public interactive dynamic of *Miteinandersein*:

(a) in order to satisfy the determinations of *arete*, *phronesis* and *eunoia*, the orator's *ethos* has to show, firstly, a firm composure and control over of his passions through *hexis*;[72]

(b) the *moment*, the distinctive *kairos* (that Heidegger mentions in *Basics Concepts*) is that one of "being-on-the-alert", "being-composed" in relation to the external *Befindlichkeit* (the disposedness of *doxai*) and the inner *Befindlichkeit* of Dasein (the disposedness of *pathe*);[73]

(c) what we grasp in the *moment* of *hexis* is the *mesotes,* since the ability of "seizing the moment" corresponds to the "aptitude for maintaining the mean",[74] which represents, in its turn, the maximum *arete* for the public Dasein

> the *meson* is hard to find and easy to miss; […] To fly off the handle is easy, but to be angry at the right moment is difficult. This requires the possibility of being able to seize the moment as a whole. Therefore, acting seldom occurs on the basis of the *mesotes* and in the *mesotes*. [75]

All these elements make the Dasein-orator, in a typically pre-Foucaultian sense, a *phronimos,* a sage, who indeed is provided with *phronesis*, *Um-sicht*,

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[69] HS, 344.

[70] The theme of "mastery" is a central theme of *The Use of Pleasure* (see, M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 31, 138–139: the ethical formation of the subject concerns a subject that ought "to be distinguished by his ability to subdue the tumultuous forces that were loosed within him, to stay in control of his store of energy, and to make his life into an *oeuvre*", ivi, 139).

[71] BCA, 99–100.

[72] See, *ivi*, 114, 116 and 119: "*Hexis* is, in an entirely fundamental way, the being-determination of genuine being, here in relation to human *praxis*. *Praxis* is characterized through *arete*, and *arete* is characterized as *hexis prohairetike*", ivi, 119.

[73] See, *ivi*, 126, 118–119 and 120–121.

[74] See, *ivi*, 126.

[75] *Ivi*, 128 and see, *ivi*, 175.

"circumspection", "foresight", *sapientia, prudentia*, *consilium* in taking decisions, and communicating them to others.[76]

But from where is this distinctive *ethos* of the public and heteropoietic Dasein, who aims at governing others, rooted? Heidegger's answer is not a surprise: it is rooted in the "care of the self" of the private and autopoietic Dasein – who aims at governing its own self. For Heidegger in *Basic Concepts*, likewise for Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, the individual/private ethics and the shared/public ethics, care/government of the self and care/government of others, *autopoiesis* and *heteropoiesis*, represent a whole, are very strictly intertwined, live in symbiosis and participate in the same *eudamonia*:[77]

> "action," *praxis*, concern is in itself the concern of the being-there which is concerned. In being involved in the world, in dealing with it, in occupying oneself with other human beings, being-there itself, which is involved in this way, is concerned with itself, with its being. *Being-there as concern is care about itself.*[78]

If the *phronesis* of Dasein is, essentially, *hexis*, and if *hexis* is "a being-composed of being-there (Dasein), oriented toward the moment",[79] then this being-composed of Dasein towards itself has to be *cultivated* (*ausgebildet*) by means of a formation process (*Ausbildung*) which is entrusted to the *auto-heteropoietic* abilities of Dasein itself. From its own self, Dasein "must, *for itself*, take the opportunity to cultivate this being-composed as a possibility".[80] In order to be cultivated, *arête*, which consists of *hexis*, presupposes and needs *time*, namely *habituation*, *undergoing*, *interaction*,[81] hence also, *deliberation*, *repetition* and *practice*.[82] Foucault would say *askesis*.[83] Only thanks to care/cultivation of the self, which needs repetition and practice, and is oriented towards *mesotes*, can Dasein achieve the condition of being free and "*composed at each moment*" by:

> *acting anew in every moment on the basis of the corresponding resolution*. Cultivating *hexis* never depends on an operation, a routine. In an operation, the moment is destroyed. Every completedness, as settled routine, breaks down in the face of the moment. Appropriation and cultivation of *hexis* through habituation means nothing other than correct repetition.[84]

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[76] See, *ivi*, 130.

[77] See, *ivi*, 66.

[78] *Ivi*, 121–122.

[79] *Ivi*, 122.

[80] *Ibidem.*

[81] *Ibidem.* "This undergoing, taking-opportunities or seeking-out-opportunities, is a process. Since we are with-one-another, in the process of dealing with human beings, we come to be steady and level-headed". *Ibidem.*

[82] *Ivi*, 127–128.

[83] "And the *askesis* may then be defined as the set, the regular, calculated succession of procedures that are able to form, definitively fix, periodically reactivate and, if necessary, reinforce this *paraskeue* for an individual. (Preparation, equipment)". HS, 327.

[84] BCA, 128.

We have to note that neither Heidegger nor Aristotle do analyse this autopoietic "correct repetition" in light of the concept of *askesis* – namely that kind of practice, discipline, training and style of life from which, *by involving the body as a psycho-physical system*, derives the *epimeleia heautou* and *techne tou biou* of the Graeco-Roman philosophies that are at the centre of Foucault's analysis in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. Nonetheless, this does not imply that the result is by any means different: cultivating the *prohairetike hexis* means, in both cases, that *phronesis* does not represent something external to the psycho-physical Self of Dasein. On the contrary, *hexis* is something that the agent has "here", *prokheiron, ad manum* "ready to hand", *in prompt*, always available for it, as a perfectly assimilated, metabolized and *embodied matrix of action*.[85] Only in this way can *hexis* represent the authentic *ethos*. For Greeks, *ethos* is, as Foucault states,

> The deportment and the way to behave. It was the subject's mode of being and a certain manner of acting visible to others. One's ethos was seen by his dress, by his bearing, by his gait, by the poise with which he reacts to events etc. For them [the Greeks], that is the concrete expression of liberty […] I do not think that a conversion is necessary so that freedom be reflected as an *ethos* that is good, beautiful, honourable, worthy and which can serve as an example, there is need of labor of self on self.[86]

As for the "Aristotelian" Heidegger, the Dasein-orator is estimable and trustworthy only if its *logos* meets its *ethos*, for Foucault the stoic master is "the individual fulfilled himself as an ethical subject by shaping a precisely measured conduct that was plainly visible to all".[87]

This is the logic of *parrhesia* (the act of telling all, frankness, open-heartedness, plain speaking, speaking openly, speaking freely),[88] wherein the autopoietic practice of the self becomes heteropoietic and opens to the other, becoming a "social relationship". Here, it becomes the "ethics of the verbal relationship with the other", and, "rule of the game, a principle of how one should conduct oneself verbally with the other",[89] as for example within the relationship between pupil and master, or every time a sage institutes a performative relationship with the other in the *Miteinandersein*. Indeed, what really "seals" the verbal *parrhesia* of the master is how he conducts himself, so that:

> the *parrhesia,* the truth of what he says, must be sealed by the way he conducts himself and the way in which he actually lives. […] let us say what we think and think what we say; let speech harmonize with conduct. […] The basis of *parrhesia* is, I think, this *adaequatio*

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[85] See, HS, 325. Following these reflections, Foucault continues using the comparison between the *askesis* of the sage and the training of the athlete, which in both cases involves repeating exercises in order to absorb psycho-physically those "inductive schemas of action", that, "when present in the head, thoughts, heart, and even body of someone who possesses them, that person will then act as if spontaneously". HS, 323.

[86] M. Foucault, *The Ethics of Care of the Self as a practice of Freedom*, 6.

[87] M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 91.

[88] See, HS, 366.

[89] *Ivi*, 164.

between the subject who speaks, and who speaks the truth, and the subject who conducts himself as this truth requires.[90]

For a better definition of the concept, Foucault, in his lectures on *The Courage of Truth* – entirely dedicated to the phenomenon of *parrhesia* – talks about the "alethurgic" conduct, "alethurgy", *alethes bios*, and *alethinos bios* of the sage.[91] He mentions four possible meanings of *alethes*: *alethes* as (a) "not hidden", "not concealed"; (b) "given to view in its entirety", "not altered"; (c) "straight", correct, "in accordance with rectitude" (d) in "identity with itself", immutable, incorruptible, unchangeable. According to Foucault, the alethurgic *ethos* is what essentially distinguishes the sage-master from the rhetor-sophist (who is artificial, seductive and flattering, etc).

Now, it is also true that the notion of *parrhesia* is not mentioned in *Rhetoric* but in *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> He is necessarily [the great souled man] open in hating and open in loving (for concealing such things belongs to one who is fearful, as does having less concern for truth (*aletheia*) than for people's opinion), and speaks and act openly (*phaneros*) (for he is free-spoken (*parresiastes*) on account of being contemptuous of others' opinion and truthful (*aletheutikos*).[92]

Even if Heidegger, in *Basic Concepts*, never talks about the phenomenon of *parrhesia*, nonetheless, we may note that the Dasein-orator, in his "bodiliness"[93] and in his visible *ethos*, must "be *himself* what bears witness to the matter that he represents" and speak "*with his person*" for the truth,[94] namely, "*having the legitimacy of comportment toward others and toward oneself at one's disposal*".[95] This means, for both Aristotle and Heidegger, that the Dasein-orator must also be "*aletheutikos*", or in Foucault's words, that he must possess the trait of,

> having being-there with respect to discoveredness at one's disposal, presenting oneself so that one's self-presentation and being with others is not a self-concealing, feigning, *presenting oneself as one is and as one thinks.* […] *aletheutikos*: being "truthful," being "undisguised" – each speaks and behaves in the way that he is.[96]

Heidegger's synthesis is extremely clear: "being-toward-oneself" and "being-toward-others" are both characterized "by *aletheuein* as a *hexis*", namely by *aletheia* as the *ethos* of the disclosive being-oriented, being-uncovered, being-able-to-be-there-unconcealed:[97] "there is a *hexis* of *aletheuein*, a possibility

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[90] *Ivi*, 405–406.

[91] See, M. Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, in Id., *Lectures at the Collège de France 1983–1984*, translated by G. Burchell, Picador, 1984, 218.

[92] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics.*, D, 3, 1124 b, 26–29.

[93] See, BCA, 134.

[94] See, *ivi*, 111.

[95] *Ivi*, 177.

[96] *Ivi*, 177–178.

[97] See, *ivi*, 178.

of existing truthfully".[98] It is exactly this kind of parrhesiastic *aletheuein* that distinguishes, in Heidegger, the "orator" – who authentically speaks to others – from the "sophist" – who just inauthentically babbles;[99] likewise in Foucault it distinguishes the sage-master from the rhetor-sophist. In this perspective, Foucault's figure of the stoic master completely overlaps with Heidegger's of the Aristotelian orator.

Both Foucault's Dasein-"master" and Heidegger's Dasein-"orator" care of (and govern) the self as far as they care of (and govern) the other,[100] thanks to the same positive *Fürsorge*, through which the individual Dasein of *Being and Time* breaks its solipsism and becomes "conscience" for the others, bringing them to their "ownmost potentiality-for-being" and at the same time their "authentically being with one another". However, we have to note a significant difference. In *Being and Time*, the interactive openness to the other of the individual Dasein remains marginal and indeterminate. Conversely, in *Basic Concepts*, for the Dasein-orator this is not only a central theme of pivotal importance, but is also developed in all its ethical, compartmental, relational, dynamic, concretely embodied, psycho-physical components, which are almost completely absent in the context of *Sein und Zeit*. This – it is worth repeating – would not have displeased either Foucault or Volpi: in Heidegger's lecture of 1924 on Aristotle, there is still no trace of the radical "ontologization" of *praxis* that in *Being and Time* would lead Heidegger to mostly a disavow Dasein of the ethical characteristics of action, thereby uprooting Dasein from the dimension of *koinonia* and enclosing it in a solipsistic horizon.

4   The Ethical *Urphänomen* of Heidegger's Ontology

However, Heidegger's inclination to the ontologization – namely the need to put the question of Being at the centre of his analysis – is already present, *in nuce*, in *Basic Concepts*, with the consequent ("Aristotelian") degeneration towards the theoreticization of the problem. At the end of his passionate analysis of Aristotle's *Politics*, *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* – concluded with the reflection on *aletheuein as* ethical-phronetic *hexis* –, Heidegger, in the name of Aristotle, rebalances, so to speak, his analysis that was excessively focused on the dimension of *praxis*:

> Aristotle treats the various possibilities of *aletheuein* thematically in Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics:* the manifoldness of such *hexis*. Two are the highest: (1) *sophia*, (2) *phronesis* – "looking-around" in the moment and *theorein*, that unlocking of the world, open-

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[98] *Ivi*, 192.

[99] See, *ivi*, 74.

[100] Care of the self, Foucault writes, "is actually something that always has to go through the relationship to someone else who is the master. One cannot care for the self except by way of the master; there is no care of the self without the presence of a master […]. The master is the person who cares about the subject's care for himself […] the master is an effective agency *(operateur)* for producing effects within the individual's reform and in his formation as a subject." HS, 58–59 and 130.

ing up of being, with which no practical secondary object can come into play, that *aletheuein* as *bios theoretikos* which presents the genuine and highest possibility of Greek existence.[101]

Hence, as we can see, the most "basic, genuine" and "own-most possibility" of Dasein is represented, according to Aristotle, by *theorein*[102] and *sophia* – and not by *praxis* or *phronesis* – whose proper object is not being-in-the-world but rather the being-of-the-world. Given this premise, then every practice and care of the self by Dasein cannot do anything else than be at the service, as its preliminary condition, of that logos which considers the "being as being", inquiring into its "origin" and "what-ness", and transforms it into the object of science and *episteme*:

> A distinctive research that does not scrutinize beings as to their concrete determinations but rather sets forth the basic respects, is guided by the question: ti to on? "What are beings as beings? What is being?"[103]

Hence, within the dimension of *legein*, there is a "more distinctive" kind of *logos* compared to the ethical-practical one of *Rhetoric*. This *logos* is not a "speaking one to another" in the *Miteinandersein* of *koinonia*, but rather this *logos*, as *horismos* and concept, is the type of "speaking" of the world and "addressing" to it, then, to Being as such.[104] Here, *logos becomes autonomous* from the practical dominion and activity, as well as from the care for the other, and then becomes independent and pure "*apophaneisthai*"- in its pure function of "bringing-to-seeing" Being.[105] Then, it becomes pure *theorein*, in which consists the "highest possibility of existence", the "real *hedone*", the true happiness – individualized? Solitary? Solipsistic? – for the human being.[106]

This is the passage that brings Heidegger, at the end of his lectures of 1924, to the shift from the practical-phronetic horizon of *Rhetoric* to the theoretical-ontological one of *Physics*, which has as its central theme the ontological question "of *physis* itself, and of the *being* beings",[107] the essence of which lies in *kinesis*, in "movement", since "*kinesis* constitutes the *genuine there-character of being*".[108]

We cannot here analyse Heidegger's complex reflection on Aristotle's equally complex view of the essence of movement. I shall just conclude with some brief considerations on this topic. Referring to *Physics* G III, 202 to 14 and ff, Heidegger holds with Aristotle that the essence (the "motility") of movement, hence the *characteristic motility of Being* – which anticipates the idea of its temporality – consists in the necessary co-presence/identity, within the one fact of matter "being-in-movement", of what moves and what is moved, *poiesis* and *pathesis*, which are in a constant "relation"[109] to each other. In epistemological and ontological terms, this means that:

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[101] BCA, 178.

[102] See, *ivi*, 63–64.

[103] *Ivi*, 193.

[104] See, *ivi*, 26 and ff.

[105] See, *ivi*, 189.

[106] See, *ivi*, 197.

[107] *Ivi*, 193–194.

[108] *Ivi*, 194.

[109] See, *ivi*, 218–217.

> every moving thing is the moving of something moved, and every moved thing is the moved of something moving. One may not tear these determinations apart, […] so that I now have two movements, and then pose the question: how do I bring them together? The moving thing is a being characterized by *poiesis*; the moved thing is characterized by *pathesis*. […] *Kinesis* as *one* is the primary thing that I can apprehend in the dual respect of *poiesis* and *pathesis*. This Aristotelian investigation into movement has a *fundamental significance for the whole ontology:* basic determination of beings as *energheia*, *entelecheia*, and *dynamis*.[110]

This purely ontological-theoretical consideration of the intrinsic motility of Being – very fruitful for Heidegger's *Seinsfrage* – seems to be at the antipodes of ethical-practical questions about the Dasein-orator as master of *parrhesia* of *Ethics* and *Rhetoric*, etc. In this way, in this perspective, ontology would absorb ethics within itself. However, if we look closer, things may be otherwise. In fact, while referring to *Physics* G III, 202 b 4 ff, Heidegger mentions the surprising ethical-practical example with which Aristotle elucidates the inner relationship between *poiesis* and *pathesis* within movement:

> This becomes visible in the discussion of teaching and learning. After all, according to its sense teaching means: speaking to another, approaching another in the mode of communicating. The genuine being of one who teaches is to stand before another, and speak to him in such a way that the other, in hearing, goes along with him. It is a unitary being-context that is determined by *kinesis*. […] *Poiesis* and *pathesis* are determinations of a unitary being that is there in the mode of being-in-movement.[111]

The fundamental ontological question of the peculiar motility of Being – according to which the "genuine there-character" of being consists in *kinesis*– finds its distinctive model in the ethical-practical dynamics of the intertwined relationship between the "forming form" (*poesis*) and "formed form" (*pathesis*) that take place in the *Bildung* process in which the master and the pupil are reciprocally involved. Likewise between the artist and his work – which already lies in *potentia* within the act of its creation[112] – the relationship between Dasein-orator-and-master, in both *Basic Concepts* (explicitly) and *Being and Time* (implicitly), and his pupil (both single and collective), gives birth to the fundamental "movement" of Care. Within it, whoever is caring for his own self is also and simultaneously caring for others and for the care that the others have for themselves, in the essential motility (or "temporality") of the dimension of *poiesis* and *praxis*. The question concerning the "*ti to on*", as Heidegger concludes, originates from the determinations of,

> *Poiesis as primary being-in-the-world, praxis. It gives rise to, as well as the closest view of, Greek ontology – not the ontology of nature!*[113]

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[110] *Ivi*, 221–222.

[111] *Ibidem*.

[112] See, G. Gurisatti, *L'animale che dunque non sono. Filosofia pratica e pratica della filosofia come est-etica dell'esistenza* (trans. *The Animal that I am Not. Practical Philosophy and Practice of Philosophy as Aesth-etics of Existence*), Mimesis, Milano, 2016, 253 ff.

[113] BCA, 222.

Even if from this analysis of *kinesis* there emerges the fundamental ontological definition of the entity as *energeia*, *entelecheia* and *dynamis*, we should bear in mind that, for both Aristotle and Heidegger, *kinesis* ultimately finds its *Urphänomen* within the practical and heteropoietic relationship of caring for one another's own existence. The fact that this aspect of the individual Dasein of *Being and Time* is greatly reduced compared to the Dasein-orator of *Basic Concepts* demonstrates, on the one hand, the meaning of Heidegger's *Kehre* but, on the other, does not completely eliminate the ethical inspiration that characterizes Heidegger's thought.

(Translation by Giulia Lanzirotti)

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The Social Hermeneutics of Dasein

Luca Bianchin

Abstract The purpose of this paper is to determine the ethical implications of the structure of Dasein as a social being. By beginning with some (critical) suggestions proposed by Emmanuel Lévinas—who accused Heidegger of omitting, on his philosophical path, any serious ethical investigations—I put forth the claim that Heidegger is not foreign to the question, and he is able to put, at its core, an ethical understanding of the issue. Although this question runs through all of Heidegger's works, I will focus only on works from the 1920s and, more specifically, on certain parts of *Being and Time*. In the early period of his philosophical investigations, one may find two levels of reflection pertaining to the problem of ethics: phenomenological reflection and ontological reflection. I thus divided my analysis into these two parts accordingly, in order to show how these levels referred to two different domains. Indeed, if the former is an attempt to describe the *mere* factual conditions of Dasein's existence (analyzing its peculiar way of being, its particular attitudes, etc.), then the second set of reflections aim at grounding this existence on its specific characteristics (that is, guaranteeing a transcendental horizon to these characteristics). At the very least, I will show how these two levels of analysis—which are typical of all the reflections found within *Being and Time*—are made possible by the particular (ontological) nature of Dasein.

Keywords Heidegger · Aristotle · Ontology · Phenomenology · Ethics · Hermeneutics

1 «Dasein in Heidegger is never hungry»

Emmanuel Lévinas' statement, from the chapter *Enjoyment and Representation* in the essay *Totality and Infinity,* which states that «Dasein in Heidegger is never hungry»,[1] is well known. Indeed, this statement reveals the discomfort expressed by

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L. Bianchin (✉)
Dipartimento di Filosofia Piero Martinetti, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan, Italy

many Heideggerian scholars, including Günter Anders, Jacques Derrida, and Theodor Adorno.[2] This discomfort stems from their focus on a specific lack in Heidegger's philosophy: this lack is interpreted as a voluntary omission and could be defined as Heidegger's explicit decision to neglect any autonomous ethical reflection in his works. In actuality, Lévinas' statement— can gather the aforementioned positions and— highlight the nature of Heidegger's omission in a more rigorous, philosophical way. Levinas' purpose was not only to highlight the absence of a volume or treatise, of a report or a course, of a conference or a seminar where Heidegger explicitly writes or talked about ethics in ethical terms. Rather, he had another purpose, which I will touch upon in greater detail later.

In the chapter *Enjoyment and Representation*, contained in the second section of *Interiority and Economy*, Lévinas deals with the practical structures of the Same (*le Même*), the new figure of subjectivity by which he tries to deconstruct the traditional ontological paradigm in favor of a metaphysical horizon that is grounded on the ethical relation of transcendence derived from the irruption of the Other.[3] Without detailing Lévinas' argument, it is essential to take note that his accusation against Heidegger's philosophy is focused on the Heideggerian misinterpretation of the nature of subjectivity: Dasein is not, in the end, an incarnated structure. Indeed, within Heidegger's ontologizing process regarding the structures of subjectivity, Dasein turns into an abstract form, without ethical-practical articulations capable of defining its real-factual *Grund*.[4]

While Lévinas' critique is broader—and it refers to a philosophical tradition that comes before Heidegger's philosophy[5]— it assumes a paradigmatic value that concerns Heidegger. Indeed, it touches upon a problematic aspect of Heidegger's philosophy and it forces us to raise the following question: would it be true to state that Heidegger's thought is alien to ethical reflection?[6] Taking up the challenge

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[2] See G. Anders, *On the Pseudo-concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy*, Total Recall Press, Friendswood, 1999; J. Derrida, *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the question*, translated by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991; T. Adorno, *Jargon den Eigentlichkeit: Zur Deutsche Ideologie*, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 1964.

[3] See in particular the first section of *Totality and Infinity*, *The Same and the Other* (E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, pp. 33–52).

[4] In Levinas' view, the Same is precisely an attempt to think of a new type of subject, as opposed to those philosophical perspectives (including the Heideggerian) where the subject is still thought of in an (theoretical-) ontological way.

[5] This is clear from the first few sentences in *Totality and Infinity*: «We do not need obscure fragments of Heraclitus to prove that being reveals itself as war to philosophical thought, that war does not only affect it as the most patent fact, but as the very patency, or the truth, of the real […]. The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy. Individuals are reduced to being bearers of forces that command them unbeknown to themselves» (*ivi*, p. 21).

[6] This is not an unusual question. On this topic see: O. Pöggeler, A. Gethmann, *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 1987; F. Rapp, *Ontologie ohne Ethik? Zur Klärung der Heidegger-Kontroverse*, in «Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung», 1989 (43), pp. 695–701; R. Branden, *Warum Heidegger keine Ethik geschrieben hat?*, Passagen, Wien, 1992; F. Volpi, *L'etica rimossa di Heidegger*, in «Micromega», 1998 (2), pp. 188 sgg; J. L. Nancy, *Heidegger's*

suggested by Levinas' statement, I will show how Heidegger's early thoughts (up to 1927) (1) is not unrelated to ethical reflection but rather (2) can guarantee the latter a solid foundation. In order to substantiate the claims made in 1 and 2, I will need to go down two different paths.

Firstly, I will discuss what we could call a *social phenomenology* of Dasein. This means that I will underlien how often Heidegger talks, especially in *Being and Time*, regarding the "social" elements of the *existential analytic*; that is, where Dasein relates not only to other entities but also to other "Daseins". It is to be noted that my definition of "social" in this case is meant to suggest all those situations in which Dasein interacts with its environment, both with common objects and with other human beings. This interaction, moreover, cannot be defined as a "pure" abstract relationship between two entities; rather, with the term "social", one can indicate the *tonality* of this interaction—namely, that it always has a specific *meaning*. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that «Dasein as such is always something of this sort; along with its Being, a context of ready-to-hand is already essentially discovered [*Dasein ist als solches je dieses, mit seinem Sein ist wesenhaft schon ein Zusammenhang von Zuhandenem entdeckt*]».[7] We will see that Dasein is not merely an abstract-theoretical structure, but is constantly linked to the world around it.

My second path will lead me to highlight what we might call the *social ontology* of Dasein. This must be analyzed further if we are to offer point (1) the right foundation. Subsequently, I will show how the relations of Dasein to the world and to the entities in the world should not be construed as accidental or contingent, but necessary—that is, they are essential parts of the ontological nature of Dasein. In so doing, I will show the link between ethics and ontology, and how, thanks to this link, we can find expressed the problem of ethics. While inquiring the issue of ethics, I will also talk about the particular structure of Dasein which I will call an *almost-transcendental* structure, i.e., a structure capable of gathering the various contents of existence into a peculiar transcendental form. As we shall see, it is this singular structure which will allows us to resolve the ethical problem present in the domain of ontology.

2   A Social Phenomenology

I will begin by highlighting a fact: *Sein und Zeit* does not begin by talking about a subject that *intellige* (that thinks, judges, wants), but by talking about an "entity" that *does*. It does things with beings, it does things with other human beings, and it

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„Originary Ethics", in «Studies in Practical Philosophy Journal», 1999 (1), pp. 12–35; A. Ardovino (ed), *Heidegger e gli orizzonti della filosofia pratica*, Guerini, Milano, 2003; J. Adrián Escudero, *Guía de lectura de ser y tiempo de Martin Heidegger*, 2 Voll., Herder Editorial, Barcelona, 2016.

[7] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* [BT], translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1985, p. 120.

primarily and originally does things with itself. This generic "doing" is important because it allows us to gather all those behaviors which Dasein exhibits "proximally and for the most part" in everyday life into a common field.[8] Now, we might ask ourselves: how is this "doing" articulated? Heidegger is evidently clear about this. He divides the relationship between Dasein and world into two domains, and specularly Dasein's behaviors can be circumscribed in two fundamental attitudes: *Besorgen* and *Fürsorge*. [9] Let us now see how Heidegger presents *Besorgen* and *Fürsorge* in the third and fourth chapters of the first division of *Being and Time*.

We see immediately that Heidegger calls "things", the things we find in the world, with which we have a daily relationship, the *equipment* (*das Zeug*). With this term, he seeks to distance himself from any "dangerous" terminology, that is, to distance himself from any specific philosophical tradition, in particular the phenomenological one.[10] In doing so, Heidegger tries not to characterize "things" with an obscure metaphysical meaning that is based upon traditional ontologies. Moreover, by defining things as equipment, he is able to "connect" them with Dasein, the entity which is dependent on[11] the equipment. The things are proximally «for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement».[12] Furthermore, it is known that «the kind of Being which equipment possesses—in which it manifests itself in its own right»[13] is defined by Heidegger as *readiness-to-hand* (*Zuhandenheit*). For this reason, «the hammering does not simply have knowledge about the hammer's character as equipment, but it has appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable. […] The hammering itself uncovers the specific

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[8] «At the outset of our analysis it is particularly important that Dasein should not be interpreted with the differentiated character [*Differenz*] of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part. This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing,* but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity. Out of this kind of Being and back into it again-is all existing, such as it is. We call this everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein *"averageness"* [*Durchschnittlichkeit*]» (*ivi*, p. 69).

[9] See *ivi* sections 15, 16 and 26.

[10] As we read in *Being and Time*: «For in addressing these entities as 'Things' (*res*)*,* we have tacitly anticipated their ontological character. […] Ontological explication discovers, as it proceeds, such characteristics of Being as substantiality, materiality, extendedness, side-by-side-ness, and so forth. […] When one designates Things as the entities that are 'proximally given', one goes ontologically astray, even though ontically one has something else in mind» (*ivi*, p. 96). See also M. Heidegger, *History of Concept of Time. Prolegomena*, translated by T. Kisiel, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 36–47.

[11] This "dependence" of the things on *Dasein* is not equivalent to the dependence of *res* on the *subiectum*. As we have seen, the quality of *res* is not supposed to define the being of things. For this reason, if we are unable to think of *Dasein* as a *subiectum*, then we would also be unable to think of the thing as an *obiectum*. See M. Heidegger, *The Age of World Picture*, in Id., *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by W. Lovitt, Garland, London-New York, 1977, pp. 115–154; M. Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth*, in Id., *Pathmarks*, edited by W. McNeill, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 136–154.

[12] BT, p. 97.

[13] *Ivi*, p. 98.

"manipulability" of the hammer».[14] It is clear that at this point, Heidegger seeks to distance himself from the Husserlian conception of the object, which is conceived as an object of consciousness.[15] According to Heidegger, «equipment is essentially "something in-order-to…" [*"etwas um-zu…"*]»[16] This "in-order-to" of equipment, and its links with a particular action, represents one of Heidegger's most important attempts at conceiving the existence of Dasein in practical terms. Indeed, Heidegger confirms this when he writes: «If we look at Things just "theoretically", we can get along without understanding readiness-to-hand».[17]

This means that it is not possible to understand the true nature of entities (the Being of entities) by approaching them in a simple theoretical-contemplative way—that is, reducing them to pure representations. Rather, the nature of entities would only come to light in a particular relationship with a type of subjectivity which (practically, actively) "uses" these entities—and manages or pre-arranges them in view of their uses. Consequently, this would be precisely the case when they stop functioning as tools[18], and show themselves as equipment, due to their readiness-to-hand. Therefore, Dasein is always busy in a constant «"*dealing*" [*Umgang*] *in* the world and *with* entities within-the-world [*innerweltlichen Seienden*]».[19] This dealing is not a contingent condition, but an original one.

As aforementioned, we may also find traces of this "practical condition"—in which the entities are disclosed not only through intellectual activities, but also through practical structures and in the relationship that an individual Dasein has with other Daseins. It is interesting to follow Heidegger's path in section 26. Here, we find two main aspects on which Heidegger lingers: the absolute difference between Others and present-at-hand entities, and the problem of solipsism. According to the former, other Daseins do not exist in the same way as things. Every Dasein conserves a peculiar ontological way of Being: it is not merely present in the world, but *exists*. This non-simple-presence in the world (that is, its non-presence-at-hand) also concerns the other human beings with which Dasein has to deal with. Consequently, both Dasein and Others share a common ontological ground where they can "meet" each other; and this common ontological ground is the character of being-in-the-world. It is precisely the world (*die Welt*) which makes this encounter possible. As Heidegger writes: «They [others] are encountered from out of the *world*».[20]

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[14] *Ibidem.*

[15] For this point, see in particular *History of Concept of Time*, sections 10–13.

[16] BT, p. 87

[17] *Ivi*, p. 98.

[18] It is what happens with «conspicuousness [*Auffallen*]», «obtrusiveness [*Aufdringlichkeit*]» and «obstinacy [*Aufsässigkeit*]» (see *ivi* pp. 102–107).

[19] *Ivi*, p. 95.

[20] *Ivi*, p. 155.

In solving the problem of the difference between the Others and the entities present in the world, Heidegger also solves the second aspect, namely the problem of solipsism. As he notes:

> Thus in characterizing the encountering of *Others,* one is again still oriented by that Dasein which is in each case one's *own.* But even in this characterization does one not start by marking out and isolating the "I' so that one must then seek some way of getting over to the Others from this isolated subject?[21]

The ground in which we can find the encounter between Daseins is the world. It is the common "transcendental field", where it is possible to fix this relationship. If being-in-the-world has the character of the «with-like [*Mithaften*]»,[22] then the world is also a *Mitwelt*, a with-world.[23] Starting from this common field, individual Daseins can interact—partake in necessary interactions, which are conceived of as parts of the structure of Dasein.

In this regard, Heidegger pinpoints the peculiar way in which these relationships take place: solicitude (*Fürsorge*). Solicitude can be expressed in the negative ways of «being against, or without one another, passing one another by, not "mattering" to one another»;[24] or in the positive way of "leaping in" (*einspringen*) or "leaping ahead" (*vorausspringen*). In addition, it is to be noted that in this case, we can see that Heidegger does not present the behaviors of Dasein by describing the theoretical conditions of their possibility. Rather, Heidegger intends to show the with-world of Dasein through disclosing the concrete and factual circumstances of its with-life. There is not, firstly, a simple, pure, abstract subject and a separate world with other subjects with which the former can (potentially) have some type of interactions.[25] Firstly, and above all else, there is Dasein, a being-in-the-world, which exists in a world that is primarily a with-world: a "space" shared with other Daseins. Consequently, since Dasein is constantly in this "movement", in this dealing (*Umgang*) with what is in the (*Um*)*Welt*, Heidegger writes that: «The Others are encountered as what they are; they *are* what they do».[26] At this point, it is important to underline how these interactions are *always* qualified. Specifically, they are interactions *of* something or someone, *with* something or someone, *from* something or someone. In this way, Heidegger can register the different modalities of the everyday life of Dasein without losing their proper existential character.

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[21] *Ivi*, p. 154.

[22] *Ivi*, p. 155.

[23] *Ibidem*.

[24] *Ivi*, p. 158.

[25] On the critique of Cartesian subjectivity (in relation to the Husserlian critique) see in particular M. Heidegger, *History at the Concept of Time*, sections 10–13. See also M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. I, *The will to Power as Art*, trans. D. F. Krell, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1979, for a different (and broader) perspective. On the relation between Descartes and Husserl in Heidegger's interpretations of subjectivity, see the important contributions from J.-L. Marion: *Heidegger and Descartes*, in C. Macann (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Critical Assessments*, cit., vol. 2, pp. 178–207.

[26] BT, p. 163.

Based on these elaborations, it is clearer now that what we call social phenomenology is a *description* of what and how and with what/whom Dasein does the things that it does. As we have seen, this social phenomenology intends to show us life in its facticity, in its concreteness. Heidegger aims to find a "pre-theoretical" domain (prior to the elaboration of any theory) where life can show itself in its intrinsic motility. In this regard, early Heidegger's courses are important as they facilitate in a better understanding of what one means here. For example, in the course of 1920/1921 on Paul and Augustine, Heidegger tries—despite the use of different terminologies from that of *Being and Time*—to find a ground where the theoretical categories are anticipated (and caused) by something more original: facticity itself. As in other courses,[27] Heidegger tells us that «philosophy arises from factical life experience. And within factical life experience philosophy returns back into factical life experience».[28] Here, the purpose is explicitly expressed: before life "thinks itself", before the human being produces an axiological system capable of making life an object of theoretical-scientific analysis, there is a peculiar movement of this life that eludes any attempt at definition.

Heidegger's analyses reveal a specific effort to construct a philosophical path capable of distancing itself from the previous theoretical systems. This means that Heidegger has to think from a different perspective when attempting to look at the role of the subject and its relationship with the world. As seen, this attempt begun in the early 20s and found a major expression in *Being and Time*. Indeed, when we read the chapters on *Welt*, *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Mit-Sein*, amongst others, we need to remember the fundamental purpose of those pages, namely the development of a philosophy which is "faithful" to the intrinsic dynamics of life. A philosophy which is able to show a new kind of subjectivity, a new kind of world, and a new kind of relationship between this two.[29]

It would be sufficient to refer to what we would term a "phenomenological" description of the "social" elements of Dasein to demonstrate how *Being and Time* is not "too ontological" or "too far" from the things in themselves and their concreteness. Rather, *Being and Time* proceeds from the ground of a concrete, common, daily existence of Dasein, a basis from which we are able to find those practical determinations that imply an ethical thinking.

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[27] See, in particular, M. Heidegger, *Ontology. The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, translated by J. van Buren, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008 and M. Heidegger, *Toward the Definition of Philosophy*, translated by T. Sadler, Continuum, London-New York, 2000 (in particular, *Phenomenology as Pre-Theoretical Primordial Sciences*, pp. 55–102).

[28] M. Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, translated by M. Fritsch and J. A. Gosetti-Ferencei, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2004, pp. 6–7.

[29] See M. Heidegger, *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, in *ivi* (in particular *The Phenomenon of the Historical*, pp. 22–37) and M. Heidegger, *Augustine and Neo-Platonism*, in *ivi* (in particular pp. 141–154).

3   A Social Ontology

In the second section, we saw how in *Being and Time,* Heidegger describes the behaviors of Dasein in the two different ways of *Besorgen* and *Fürsorge*. This attempt should demonstrate how the subject is not something separate, but something constantly related to the world (or, better, to the entities in the world because of its constitution as being-in-the-world). However, this reading is not sufficient to clarify why and how Heidegger's thought is not devoid of ethical implications, as these descriptions of the different aspects of Dasein could be seen as simple, "external" conditions, that is, mere phenomenological states. Thus, my proposal aims to provide an in-depth analysis: I will show how Heidegger's ethical perspective has to be seen only in the light of ontology, and, more precisely, of the ontology of Dasein as it is developed in *Being and Time*.

I would like to refer to Franco Volpi's analysis, in *Heidegger e Aristotele*.[30] In this book, Volpi shows how deeply Heidegger, in his critique of the traditional philosophy, considers Aristotle as a distinctive author. Heidegger's dialogue with Aristotelian philosophy is not sporadic or occasional, but runs through all of his from the early 20s to his later ones, after the *Kehre*. In particular—and this is the most relevant point—according to Volpi Heidegger would have recovered the Aristotelian specific technical terminology, "translated" it in an ontological key, and then used it to constitute the conceptual architecture of *Being and Time*.

Without taking into consideration the details of Volpi's analysis,[31] I would like to highlight Volpi's fundamental intuition: in *Being and Time,* the three ways of Being of *Vorhandenheit*, *Zuhandenheit* and *Dasein* would correspond to the three Aristotelian determinations of *theoria*, *poiesis* e *praxis*. In this way, *Vorhandenheit* (that is, the way of Being of the entities seen under a theoretical-contemplative perspective) would correspond to the Aristotelian *theoria*; the *Zuhandenheit* (the ontological condition of the entities with which human being has a practical relationship) would correspond to the Aristotelian *poiesis*, the ethical-practical attitude. Finally, Volpi pinpoints the analogy between *praxis* and Dasein. [32]

Now, I would like to highlight two aspects: 1) The Aristotelian determinations employed in the characterization of Dasein are *practical* determinations—that is, they refer to the factual dimension and not to the theoretical (-contemplative) one.[33]

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[30] F. Volpi, *Heidegger e Aristotele*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2010. See also, F. Volpi, *Dasein as 'praxis'*, in C. Macann (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Critical Assessments*, IV Voll., Routdledge, London, 1992, vol. 2, pp. 90–129.

[31] These analyses should be considered in conjunction with Heidegger's reflections in *Die Gründbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosphie*, works which had yet to be edited when Volpi wrote this book.

[32] In addition to these analogies, Volpi identifies other similarities: *Befindlichkeit* would correspond to the Aristotelian *pathe*, *Sorge* to *orexis* and *Verstehen* to *nous praktikos* (Cfr. F. Volpi, *Heidegger and Aristotele*, pp. 68–71).

[33] If we look at the work *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* from the year 1924, we see how carefully Heidegger examines the Aristotelian concepts. However, he prefers to work with con-

2) These determinations are *ontologized*. This fact is important because by thinking it through, we will arrive at the meaning behind Heidegger's gesture. Heidegger did not only take some concepts from Aristotle and ascribe them an ontological value just to insert them into his thought of Being. If this were the case, he would have just removed the Aristotelian concepts from the originally practical features that they originally had, and propose them in a different philosophical context. Heidegger's purpose is different. He seeks to *positively and not accidentally* connect the ontology with the structures of the new type of subjectivity that he defines in terms of Dasein. In so doing, Heidegger gains a solid ground on which he can build an ontology, one that cannot be separated from the motility of factual, practical life. Accordingly, the "subject" is not defined or derived from an intuitive self-evidence: there is no original epistemological act from which one can infer gnoseological-epistemological evidences. Rather, Dasein is "always already" involved in a dynamic interaction with what-is-not-itself (the entities, other subjects). At the very beginning, this particular form of subjectivity does not have any other essential references to itself, but only its own, effective, factual existence.[34] Thus, in its essential (i.e. *existential*) projection, Dasein can be viewed as an active element of this projection itself. Indeed, Dasein is not a simple egocentric cornerstone of a representational moment that comes first and has its relationship grounded with the world. In the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger writes that «perception is directed toward the extant being itself»,[35] and it is clear that his intent was to remove any mediation between the supposed immanent interiority of consciousness and the transcendental objectiveness of the external world. Transcendence is not a property of the object, but a fundamental part of the constitution of the subject: «The transcending is constituted by the intentional comportments themselves».[36] In so claiming, Heidegger can finally conclude that «the mode of being of our own self, Dasein, is essentially such that this being, so far as it is, is always already dwelling with the extant».[37]

The space between subject and world—the same space that modern philosophy has filled with representation—appears empty, but in a very particular way: this emptiness is an open-ness (*das Da-*, the There). This emptiness, which (according to Heidegger) was viewed with embarrassment by Descartes, Kant, and the entire modern tradition up to Husserl, and was subsequently filled with the "bridge" of a representation—namely, with a theoretical act, with a property of consciousness, with a faculty, with a quality of the soul or the spirit—, is conceived of by Heidegger as Care (*Sorge*). In other words, this emptiness is understood within a new ontological horizon, in which it becomes a practical, mobile, interactive, intersubjective

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cepts from *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric* and *De anima*, using the references from the *Metaphysics* only as a horizon and not as a specific object of research.

[34] See BT, section 9.

[35] M. Heidegger, *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, translation by A. Hofstadter, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1988, p. 63.

[36] *Ivi*, p. 64.

[37] *Ibidem*.

dimension. Hence, Heidegger writes: «Kant calls it "a scandal of philosophy and of human reason in general": that there is still no cogent proof for the "Dasein of Things outside of us" which will do away with any scepticism»;[38] rather, «the "scandal of philosophy" is not that this proof has yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again*».[39] This bridge is neither internal to the subject nor a property of the object. Rather, this bridge—if we may still talk of a bridge—is always given, and already present in the ontological relationship between Dasein and the world; a practical relationship, a relationship of Care. In this way, we see how Heidegger tries to ground the various attitudes of Dasein in a new ontological horizon; indeed, through this method, Heidegger guarantees a specific foundation to all of them. When we talk of *Besorgen* and *Fürsorge*, we have to bear in mind that all the ontic behaviors of Dasein thus have an ontological account.

Indeed, this issue would concern *all* the behaviors of Dasein, and it comes from the particular constitution of Dasein itself. On this view, the definition of Dasein as *in-der-Welt-sein* should be viewed as the most appropriate one for the following reasons:

– the part *in-der* contains the reference to the concreteness of life, namely its constant relation to specific and variable existential contents;
– the part *sein* means the attempt to create a structure capable of gathering these existential contents;
– the part *Welt* indicates the ground on which the relation between the subject and its outward appearance takes place.

Thus, Dasein exhibits that which one could call an *almost-transcendental* structure. With this expression, I would like to highlight the fact that the existential structures of Dasein have a very unique form: they can both gather the different (concrete, factual, contingent) contents of life and simultaneously guarantee a specific transcendental form—that is, a structure which can hold these contents together in a single, specific center of subjectivity.

In this context, it becomes clear how ethics, conceived as a traditional discipline with specific questions that are concerned with the relation between the human being and its own world, cannot find a place in this new thought, which might give us a new perspective on subjectivity and its links to the world.

4   Conclusions

We have seen how Heidegger sought to answer one of the most important and problematic questions of our time: how is ethics possible *today*? At a time when metaphysics can no longer give us solid ground to base our moral guidelines on; when

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[38] BT, p. 247.
[39] *Ivi*, p. 249.

the subject is losing its ability to create an axiological system; when values are being exposed to the incessant process of historization; when *Gott ist tot und bleibt tot*; when nihilism has corroded our link with the past and our "confidence" in a possible future—in this era, questioning ethics could be an uphill task. For this reason, Heidegger does not raise the ethical issue in ethical terms, but instead affixes some conditions and some boundaries within which ethical question may be formulated. Indeed, we find that the field traced by these boundaries is ontology. Only the question of being can give us the tools required to solve this problem without losing the possibility of renewing our philosophical perspective.

Indeed, according to Heidegger, ontology is not just one discipline among others. Instead, Ontology represents the core of that philosophical gesture which defines *all* philosophical concepts. Indeed, the question of being can reveal all those preconceptions that persist in our philosophical tradition; thus, Heidegger does not present an explicit ethical reflection, because he believes that it is possible to ground this discipline only through an ontological analysis.

In Heidegger, ethics likes to hide. Not because it is not present, but because it lies in wait for the right foundation. In accordance with this notion, he states:

> The desire for an ethics presses ever more ardently for fulfillment as the obvious no less than the hidden perplexity of human beings soars to immeasurable heights. The greatest care must be fostered upon the ethical bond at a time when technological human beings, delivered over to mass society, can attain reliable constancy only by gathering and ordering all their plans and activities in a way that corresponds to technology.
>
>   Who can disregard our predicament? Should we not safeguard and secure the existing bonds even if they hold human beings together ever so tenuously and merely for the present? Certainly. But does this need ever release thought from the task of thinking what still remains principally to be thought and, as being, prior to all beings, is their guarantor and their truth? Even further, can thinking refuse to think being after the latter has lain hidden so long in oblivion but at the same time has made itself known in the present moment of world history by the uprooting of all beings?[40]

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[40] M. Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, in M. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, p. 268.

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Politics and Territory. Remarks on Heidegger's Political Philosophy

Jesús Adrián Escudero

Abstract Martin Heidegger was thoroughly convinced that Germany was in need of a radical and strong change in its political trajectory when he became Rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933. His support of National Socialism and anti-Semitic justifications during that point in time is well documented -particularly in his seminar 1933/34 *On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, and State.* However, when one puts aside the open adherence to Hitlerian leadership and the polemic question of anti-Semitism, the seminar also provides ideas and reflections on politics and territory that might be interesting to follow up on and develop.

Here, I would like to briefly focus on two aspects: firstly, I will look at Heidegger's efforts to outline an ontology of political space based upon concepts such as the leader, living space, spiritual space, and homeland; secondly, I will look to his understanding of Germanness in terms of people, belonging, groundedness and resoluteness.

Keywords Groundedness · Homeland · Living space · People · Resoluteness

Martin Heidegger was thoroughly convinced that Germany was in need of a radical and strong change in its political trajectory when he wrote a letter to Elisabeth Blochmann in the Spring of 1933, expressing his definitive entry into the realm of politics: "In my opinion, the current situation requires a great implementation of action, commitment, and participation toward the construction of a world founded upon the people. We can only take on this challenge if we expose ourselves and take possession of this construction in a new way. *The time for a first awakening has arrived.*" (Heidegger and Blochmann [1989], 60–author's italics) Heidegger's assessment of German society of that time concludes with a plea for political change and highlighted the need for a social transformation which should be headed by the

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J. A. Escudero (✉)
Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
e-mail: jesus.adrian@uab.es

German university. One of the messages he expressed in his Rectoral Address was titled "The Self-Assertion of the German University", and was presented on the 27th of May, 1933 at the University of Freiburg. The speech is peppered with intense rhetoric that held patriotic, nationalist, militaristic, and heroic tones. Indeed, during that point in time, Heidegger's life was at a personal, philosophical, and political crossroads as he had to face the dangers that threatened the university and, in consequence, Germany, during a time of crisis. As such, he temporarily associated himself with National Socialism.

Heidegger's support of the National Socialist regime is common knowledge. However, recent publications of the first volumes of his *Black Notebooks* (Heidegger 2014a) and of the correspondence between Martin Heidegger and his brother Fritz have rekindled the flame of interest regarding the National Socialist controversy and re-exposed the prickly issue of anti-Semitism (Homolka and Heidegger 2016). The documentary evidence is overwhelming: from his Rectoral Address (2000a, 107–117) and the public speeches given as rector (Heidegger 2000a, 125–127, 198–207, and 285–307), to his philosophy lectures regarding the Hegelian Right (Heidegger 2011, 59–187), to cite a few examples. Furthermore, one can add his 1933/34 seminar *On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, and State* (Heidegger 2009, 53–88). In this text—as Polt correctly comments—there are "outlines of a political philosophy which supports Hitler's dictatorship, justifies German expansionism, and legitimizes the persecution of the Jews." (Polt 2013, 1)

However, when one puts aside the controversial support to National Socialism, the open adherence to Hitlerian leadership and the polemic question of anti-Semitism, the seminar also provides ideas and reflections on politics and territory that might be interesting to follow up on and develop. For example, what are the main points of the political philosophy that he suggested in the 1933/34 seminar? What role does the leader play in the State constitution and in the structuring of the will of the people? What function will the German university serve in carrying out the political education of the citizens? What would be Germany's destiny after the crisis of the Weimar Republic? How far does its territory extend? Who belongs within the German sphere? What does the Germanic spirit consist of?

In the follow sections, I would like to briefly focus on two aspects: firstly, I will look at Heidegger's efforts to outline an ontology of political space based upon concepts such as the leader, living space, spiritual space, and homeland; secondly, I will look to his understanding of Germanness in terms of people, belonging, groundedness and resoluteness.

1   Toward an Ontology of Political Space

Space and spatiality play an important role in Heidegger's reflections of art and dwelling in an era that was dominated by technology. However, we know almost nothing with regards to his understanding of borders until the recent publication of the aforementioned seminar on *Nature, History, and State*, with the seminar placing

a great emphasis on the relationship that exists between the people and the State. In it, he propagates that the unity and the destiny of a people are guaranteed by the State. In a distinctly conservative reading of Hegel, it is asserted that the people only achieve their full development within the political framework of the State. For Heidegger, the State does not represent a legal arrangement that is established by a contract between free citizens, but instead embodies a people's way of being (Heidegger 2009, 71, 1998a, 54ff). Every aspect pertaining to the rational basis of the State is inspired by the social contract, and any attempt to found the State rationally as an expression of sovereignty appears to remain secondary. Thus, one abandons the modern notion of the State as supported by the social contract (Rousseau) and in regulation according to rational principles (Kant) in favor of a type of political organization which could qualify as pre-modern and as being rooted in relationships of obedience, dedication, loyalty, and service.[1] In other words, the State is once again emphasized to not be an arrangement created by free citizens but rather as a way of being. Indeed, Heidegger seeks an ontological understanding that explains the connection between the State and the people, and this leads to the question of what then are the relationships between citizens and the State founded upon?

1. *The role of the leader*. From a Heideggerian perspective, the State is based on the dominion (*Herrschaft*), which is held by the leader (*Führer*); a dominion which extends not so much in terms of vassalage and subordination but as an expression of voluntary dedication toward a common task, which the seminar text expresses in the following terms: "Only where the leader and his followers are linked to a common destiny and fight for *one* idea does order emerge." (Heidegger 2009, 77)[2] The strength of the State is thus dependent on the people and the leader who unites their forces in the interest of recognizing a collective destiny. Consequently, if the State is not the result of a contract, what authority would be capable of expressing the will of the people? The destiny of a people seems to remain in the hands of a leader, and this is prevalent in the seventh, ninth, and tenth session of the seminar, which analyze the nature and the role of a leader in further detail.

First, a leader can only guide the people if he has the support of the educated elite, political nobility, and a group of watchmen. Here resounds the echo of the watchmen of the Platonic State who are at the service of the governing philosopher.

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[1] Nonetheless, Heidegger is convinced that philosophy, in its original sense, can only be carried out in dialogue with politics – albeit with a very specific notion of politics. In his case, it is not so much politics in an institutional, legal, and socio-economic sense as it is land politics, geopolitics, and archi-politics (Bambach 2003, 144). This land politics represents the historical and ontological space in which Dasein struggles to find its place. Its own sense of being is rooted in the community, in tradition, and in history.

[2] The destiny of each individual (*Schicksal*) is closely interconnected to the destiny of the people (*Volksgeschick*) to which one belongs. Undoubtedly, one can detect an echo of *Geschick* being covered in *Being and Time*. Collective destiny (*Geschick*) is not something that is granted in advance; conversely, it is a matter of a common search (as denoted by the collective prefix *Ge-*) for the historic possibilities that tradition sends (*schicken*) to a community.

In Heidegger's opinion, the German State needs to be governed by a leader like Adolf Hitler, a person who embodies the historic moment, thereby allowing the German people to decide their fate.[3]

Secondly, the State is founded upon the will of a charismatic leader. The true leader restricts himself to showing the way to those whom he leads rather than subduing them through coercion. Viewed from another perspective, this puts forth the notion that the people are transformed into a political community thanks to the will of the leader and his capacity to guide the will of individuals. A true leader does not need to use coercion; his leadership alone would have the capacity to awaken a collective will of dedication within his followers toward a higher common destiny. The community is thus based upon this vital link between leader and followers in a heavier degree than upon the strength of institutions. Consequently, it is only through this that an authentic community can become a people.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Heidegger evades any reference to the nature of the will of the people. The distinction between the will of the State and the will of the leader contains at least two dangers: on the one hand, it justifies the establishment of a populist regime, such as National Socialism, and on the other hand, it barely gives the citizens the ability to respond or to express their disagreement. Heidegger concludes the seminar by recognizing that Hitler's State (*Füher-Staat*) represents the culmination of a historic process of rebuilding the German community that dates back to the Middle Ages and which was interrupted during the modern era. Emphasis is thus placed on the personal genius of the statesmen, such as Bismarck and, in particular, Hitler; an emphasis easily identified by an excessive worship of personality that was adopted by the form of the so-called leadership principle (*Führerprinzip*).

2. *Living space.* Heidegger had a particular vision of the history of being in which there is a privileged relationship established between the Greeks and the Germans, or more accurately, between the Greek thinkers and the German poets. From this point of view, the German identity is shaped linguistically, historically, culturally, and spiritually around the notion of homeland (*Heimat*) or native land (*Heimatland*). The German spirit is primarily composed of the rootedness that the Germans established in their tradition and their history, in their community, and their living space. By reconfiguring the German identity in terms of rootedness and autochthony rather than through strict economical and territorial criteria, Heidegger emphasizes the fundamental dimension of German existence: its establishment in a land whose true significance is more historical and spiritual than geographical and topographical.

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[3] In his analysis of the political and spiritual situation of Germany that was offered at the beginning of the lectures from the Summer semester of 1933, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, stress is placed again on the idea that the progression of the German people is at a crossroads, at which the Third Reich is interpreted as the historic moment to make way for a new beginning, as the appropriate time (*kairos*) to undertake a political change and set the reform of the German university into motion (Heidegger 2001, 3).

How then should that space be understood? The question of the living space is a central topic in Heidegger's work. For him, the living space is a complex of places that things and humans belong to. When Heidegger speaks about the living space (*Lebensraum*), he mainly thinks of a space understood in existential terms. We are being-there (*Dasein*), which is to say we are open to reality in the sense that we are primarily engaged and involved with our world —be it in our environment, our surrounding, our community or our State. This kind of involvement is our genuine way of existing.[4] It is not a matter of a geometric, physical, quantitative and homogeneous space in which one simply measures an object's distance, but rather a pragmatic, public, and significant space which refers to the sphere of action in which the activities of human life unfold. In short, it is a matter of the living space of belonging, and this does not necessarily coincide with the geographic space of a State's borders.

What then is a definition of a people's living space? What principles delineate German territory? What are the criteria for belonging to a people? In the eighth session of the seminar a people's space is defined by two basic criteria: homeland (*Heimat*) and interaction (*Verkehr*). The native land that immediately seems familiar to us is characterized by one's rootedness in the soil and permanence in the land (*Bodenständigkeit*)[5], while interaction expresses the impulse for expansion.[6] In this way one distinguishes a people's space from their State's space, its territory (*Territorium*) or domain of power (*Herrschaftsgebiet*).

This interpretation of a people's space had some clear political implications which mainly affected two groups: the Germans who lived outside the empire's borders and the so-called "Semitic nomads" (Heidegger 2009, 82). Heidegger explains that the Germans who resided outside of German territory suffered from a sort of emptiness of essence: undoubtedly, they had roots in German land, but since they did not belong to the German State, they were "deprived of its authentic way of being". (Heidegger 2009, 82)[7]

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[4] In other words, we first and foremost dwell in the world, which constitutes the horizon, context, background for our lives. The interpretation of dwelling in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* offers a different explanation to the way we inhabit our place from machination (*Machenschaft*) and enframing (*Gestell*). Dwelling is more than looking for shelter; it is the experience of how we shelter. As human beings inhabit the land and dwell in it, they create spaces whose borders do not necessarily coincide with territorial and/or geographical boundaries. The land constitutes what the Greeks call *chthōn*: the place where humans dwell and create a homeland. For Heidegger's rehabilitation of the terms of space and place, see further Malpas (1999, 19–22, and 2012, 42ff).

[5] In literal terms, *Bodenständigkeit* (groundedness or rootedness) as a permanence on one's own soil (*Boden*) constitutes a primordial element of stability (*Ständigkeit*), as much for the individual as for the community.

[6] Regarding whether there was a need to expand German territory toward the northeast, see Heidegger (2000a, 240).

[7] Here one can already detect the source of the dialectic between rootedness and uprootedness, which later becomes one of the central ideas of the well-known conference "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1951). In it, one recognizes that dwelling authentically can only emerge from a clash with uprootedness (Heidegger 2000b, 163). In fact, the existence of every individual, and consequently of the community, develops within the framework of a constant fluctuation between root-

   In the case of the nomads, it is held that they are not rooted in a native land. Furthermore, it is even claimed that the nomads have left behind deserts and steppes where they found fertile and arable land (Heidegger 2009, 81). This meant that a people's living space determines their essence, and in some way, influences their sense of belonging. Thus, there is a criterion which excludes certain groups—such as the Semitic nomads and the Jews—from fitting into the living space of the Germans. It is said that Jews have no experience of rootedness and, therefore, they are stigmatized as non-Germans. In the end, this correlation between living space and political space also served as an ideological excuse that justified the conquering of new territories and the expulsion of the nomads, which, in practice, meant supporting Germanic expansionism and adopting a markedly anti-Semitic perspective.

3. *Spiritual Space: The Myth of Secret Germany.* By reconfiguring German identity in terms of permanence on native land and interaction rather than on a strict economic and territorial criterion, Heidegger highlights a fundamental dimension of German existence: its rootedness in the native land. Here, land has an ontological meaning.[8] Native land is the space which allows the unleashing of human potential for existence. As human beings inhabit the Earth, we create spaces whose limits do not always correspond with territorial and/or geographical borders. In order to fight existential uprooting, political and social unrest, and the economic instability of the Weimar period, Heidegger attempts to regain access to the deep roots of Germany and Western philosophical tradition. This return to German origins of homeland is a common claim of the conservative wing of the so-called "people's movement" (*Volkstum*).[9] Authors such as Paul Yorck von Wartenburg and Oswald Spengler are two representatives of this movement who, among others, held a strong influence on Heidegger's views.

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edness and uprootedness, groundedness and groundlessness. In his writings from the 1930s, he asserts the idea that rootedness is gained through combat, through struggle (*Kampf*); his writings from the 1950s, in contrast, abandon the notion of clash in favor of a more meditative and calm attitude, such as that of letting-be (*Gelassenheit*).

[8] For example, in *The Origin of the Work of Art,* the concept of "land" (*Erde*) does not refer to an idealized natural environment. Land, rather, is a dimension of human existence in constant confrontation with culture and the world. Land is not a stable foundation, but rather a space that allows creative possibilities of existence to develop (Heidegger 2003, 35f).

[9] Ferdinand Tönnies is one of the main representatives of these people's (*völkisch*) movement. According to him, the West is defined by two types of social organization: society (*Gesellschaft*) and community (*Gemeinschaft*). The first is an artificial association based on the idea of an interest-motivated free contract between individuals, while the second is characterized by family and blood ties, through sharing a common place and land, and by having the same people's spirit. Societies are governed by calculation, greed, power, ambition, vanity, profit, lack of spirit, and the exploitation of nature and of individuals. In contrast, communities are guided by passion, sensuality, courage, piety, imagination, respect for nature, and remaining in one's homeland. In the words of Tönnies, "in the course of history, the people's culture [*Kultur des Volkstum*] has become a state civilization [*Zivilisation des Staatstum*]." (Tönnies 1963, 251) Heidegger came into contact with the motifs of "community," "people," and "culture" expressed by Tönnies through his reading of Spengler's book *The Decline of the West*, a reading to which he dedicated several classes during the first Freiburg courses at the beginning of the twenties.

> This also served in explaining his interest in German poets and Greek thinkers, and, in particular, his interest in the myth of Secret Germany.

The expression "Secret Germany" (*geheimes Deutschland*) stems from Stefan George's circle, a group of antimodernist and conservative intellectuals who believed in a Germany whose origins date back to Ancient Greece and Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire.[10] Norbert von Hellingrath and Max Kommerell, two of the major representatives from George's circle, fostered the dream of a Platonic State which was hidden and only exists in the words of Hölderlin.[11] Hölderlin was the poet who glimpses the existence of a Germany that remains silent, inaccessible, and unknown to the vast majority of Germans. As such, the references to that Secret Germany adhere to the notion of native land (*Heimatboden*) and rootedness (*Bodenständigkeit*). Native land and rootedness are not understood in a material and geographic sense, but rather in poetic and linguistic terms. According to Hölderlin, the German essence rests in its language. The task of the poet consists of finding the words and names that express the true German spirit. A language is the soul of a people, and constitutes their view of the world and the shaping of their lives.

Indeed, the secret and spiritual Germany is widely mentioned in "The German University," a speech delivered to students in August of 1934. Heidegger asserts that the awakening of this new spirit which was pioneered by three powers that emerged strongly during the period from 1770 to 1830: German poetry (Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin), German philosophy (Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Hegel), and German politics (Freiherr von Stein, Humboldt, Gneisenau, and Clausewitz) (Heidegger 2000a, 291).[12] Those poets, thinkers, and statesmen forged the new spiritual world of the Germans and established new conditions of freedom. Freedom, in this case, is interpreted as dedication to the will of the State and commitment to the people's destiny.

Likewise, the promotion of the German spirit is closely linked to the need for providing the Germans with a comprehensive education. The founding of the University of Berlin in 1810 represents the culmination of that task. Heidegger endorsed and took on that same task when he became rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933. Yet, it was clear that he adapted his own project of university reforms to the events of the time, which in practice meant becoming involved in National Socialism. Therewith he attempted to complement the political revolution that was already underway with a deeper revolution that was headed by the assertions of the German university. The true task of the German university was thus to honor and spiritualize that era: "The history of the German university is the history

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[10] From a historical perspective, "Secret Germany" becomes a very common expression among the romantics that defines the unique and peculiar character of the German spirit. Among others, Fichte, Schiller, Herder and Heine invoke the mysterious and anonymous Germany that has yet to come.

[11] What follows is based on the analysis of Kisiel (2009a, 145ff).

[12] In his lectures from the winter semester of 1934/1935, in which Hölderlin's patriotic hymns *Germania* and *The Rhine* are analyzed in detail, one is reminded again that the historic destiny of a people lies within the creative forces of poets, thinkers, and statesmen (Heidegger 1999, 144).

of the German spirit. And the history of the German spirit is the destiny of the German people." (Heidegger 2000a, 285) For Heidegger, the German people must first be educated in order to truly fulfill their historic destiny in a free, proper, and determined way.

This leads to certain questions, such as where can this Secret Germany be found? In the spirit of the war front? In the revolution? In the world of the farmer? The answer would be in none of the above. Secret Germany still remains a mystery. In fact, the university's task was to prepare the people for the revelation of that mystery and the acceptance of their destiny (Heidegger 2000a, 302). In the end, the historical destiny of Germany in Europe and the rest of the world depended to a great extent on the decisions that originated from poets, thinkers, and statesmen.

2   The German Question: Groundedness and Resoluteness as Belonging Criteria

One of the central questions that gives structure to many of Heidegger's reflections contained in the *Black Notebooks* and in many of his speeches in the thirties is "Who *are* we?" (Heidegger 2014a, 5) It is a question that accompanies Heidegger constantly throughout his entirely work. *Being and Time* describes both the authentic and inauthentic modes of being, by which each person fulfills its own identity and selfhood. The Dasein, as each case demonstrated, had to face the questions of "Who am I?", and "What do I want to become?" However, the political writings of the 1930s focused more on the collective destiny of the German people. One of the guiding threads in the *Black Notebooks* was the question "Who are we—the Germans?": "Being German: the most private burden in the history of the Western world on which it is placed and which must be borne on our backs." (Heidegger 2014b, 1)

Who are we? Do we know ourselves? What does it mean to be German? This type of questions were first timidly raised in the lectures of 1929/30 *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics,* and were gradually developed in the early 30s into the question that involved the fate of Germany's collective identity. The Rectoral Address of 1933 speaks about the destiny of the German academic community, but the community of teachers and students are almost immediately absorbed into the larger community of the nation and the historical community of German people.[13] As Kisiel pointed out, the selfhood and identity of this people could be defined in terms such as mission, history, language, tradition, destiny (Kisiel 2009b, 116). Finally, in the Hölderlin courses of 1935, the people conquered their destiny by invoking patriotic words, like homeland (*Heimatland),* fatherland *(Vaterland*), earth (*Erde*), blood (*Blut*), and soil (*Boden*).

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[13] See, for example, the reflections on the self (*das Selbst*) and the people (*Volk*) one can find in the logic course of 1934 (Heidegger 1998a, 35–77).

Consequently, one might ask: what are the basic elements and criteria that define a German people (*Volk*) or Germanness (*Deutschtum*)? Heidegger established that resoluteness was a fundamental criterion of belonging. The topic of a German people plays a pivotal role in the political thought of Heidegger—as in the case of the above-mentioned seminar and his lectures from the summer semester of 1934, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*. One of the things that Heidegger sought to show to his students was that science was not able to determine the belonging of an individual to a people. Science can help establish the conditions by which someone belongs to a community, including the biological and racial criteria. However, true belonging to a people depends on a resoluteness by which the individual opts for his people or his State (Heidegger 1998a, 75–77).[14] As such, it cannot be left to the scientists to decide who belongs and does not belong to a people. Instead, it is an individual decision that each person must make freely for him or herself.

By questioning the scientific criteria that explain the makeup of a people, Heidegger also rejects the argument of descent (*Abstammung*). Descent—as Bernasconi (2013) observes—is not a determining factor: even if someone satisfies all the formal conditions needed to be considered a member of a group, belonging is ultimately the result of a decision (*Entscheidung*) and resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*). In that sense, his lectures on logic show a clear dismissal of the biological theses of the National Socialist program. A people (*Volk*), that is, the us (*das Wir*), is not determined by sharing a way of life, having the same understanding of the world, or coexisting in the same geographical place, much less by possessing the same racial features (Heidegger 1998a, 54, 56).[15] While a people can be defined

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[14] It is worth remembering that the elaboration of the theory of a German people (*deutsches Volk)* or of Germanness (*Deutschtum*) developed at the beginning of the 19th century within the context of the Napoleonic wars with a strong emphasis on the German language (Humboldt, Schlegel, Herder and Goethe, among others). The people (*Volk*) became the primordial expression of the German community. An individual comprises a part of a people by being born into it and becomes a member of that people as he acquires their patterns of thought and behavior. Those patterns are expressed in the language and in the emotional ties that one establishes with one's family, one's land, and one's environment. Such emotional ties are later integrated into the productive political slogan "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*) as part of a racial anthropology that firmly believed in the unity of blood, in the community of blood, and in blood consciousness (regarding this, see Hutton 2005, 17–21).

[15] This rejection of a racial and biological basis of a people is frequently repeated in his writings starting from the second half of the 1930s (see, for example, Heidegger 1994, 117, 399 y 493; 1997, 42; 1998b, 44, 70). Despite this, one must proceed cautiously when deciphering Heidegger's words. Without broaching the delicate and controversial topic of anti-Semitism, which has been covered elsewhere, it is evident that Heidegger establishes a clear distinction between Jews and non-Jews, one of which could describe as anti-Semitic. However, it is an anti-Semitism that is not based on biological and racial criteria. In our opinion, Heidegger expands and justifies an anti-Jewish tradition which, in German thinking, dates back to Luther, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Yorck, Frege and Spengler, among others (Adrián Escudero 2015, 35–39). When Heidegger attacks the role of Jews in German universities and speaks of a "Judaization of German culture" (Sieg 1989, 50), he does not do so based as much on biological and racial criteria as he does based on cultural prejudice. Of course, while noting this, it does not minimize the impact of his anti-Semitic opin-

in many ways, including racially, a people has to have a fundamentally spiritual consciousness; a type of reality that develops within the framework of a given historical community.

Heidegger displays much skepticism with regards to the cosmopolitanism and liberalism of the Weimar Republic, the latter of which he considered responsible for the weakening of the German State. Yet, how can the situation be reversed? How can the community be restored while facing the individualism of the modern era? The seminar *On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, and State* proposes an ingenious, albeit problematic, interpretation of the Aristotelian notion of a human being, which is understood as a *zoon politikon*. To Heidegger, *zoon politikon* meant that a human being has the responsibility and the need to fulfill his individual and collective destiny within the horizon of the community (Heidegger 2009, 71). In the end, the German State is founded upon a historical decision of the Germans, which will also determine their collective destiny as a people. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that Heidegger rejects the race theory and the subsequent biological basis of the State, while, at the same time, attempts to justify the antidemocratic State of Hitler as a continuation and culmination of the Greek *polis* (Heinz 2013, 72).[16] The attentive reader of Aristotle would also constantly notice the fact that there is avoidance of any reference to the idea of free citizens who manage to attain the ultimate goal of happiness through deliberation (*boulesis*). The text artfully substitutes free deliberation of the citizens with a vague self-determination of the people lead by the will of the *Führer*. This means that the formation of all that which is political as a fundamental possibility of human existence can no longer be left to a particular individual's decision, but rather requires a political education that would be capable of "leading us to our own political being." (Heidegger 2009,73) This plea is not at all accidental, nor by any means innocent at that particular point in history, which was during the founding of the Third Reich.

In summary, homeland and groundedness, the people, and living space are key concepts required in understanding Heidegger's reflections on the German spirit: remaining in one's land and place of birth constitutes a primordial element of stability that defines the primordial criteria of belonging. Those who abandon their own soil in favor of urban life and are not grounded in their own land have lost ties to their historical community. A person's existence is essentially comprised by its belonging to the people –primarily, the German people under the guidance of the

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ions and comments.

[16] According to Heidegger, the original meaning of *polis* refers not only to a geographically-located city (*Stadt*) and a state (*Staat*), but also to its placement (*Stätte*), its historical site (*Geschichts-Stätte*) of coexistence to which its gods, temples, priests, festivals, poets, thinkers, governors, elder council and its citizen assemblies all belong (Heidegger 1983, 161f). As Kisiel observes, here *Stätte* is virtually identified with *Dasein* as the ontological place (*Da*) where a people, such as the Greeks or Germans, develop their being (*Sein*) (Kisiel 2009b, 125). In a creative play on words, it is said that *Stätte* is the place where human existence takes place (*statt-findet*) and is allowed (*gestattet*). The mission of the Germanic people thus consists in their reclaiming of the archaic meaning of *polis* and their remembering of the popular myths of a pure, native, and secret Germany, such as the one conjured by Hölderlin.

leader. In Heidegger's opinion, groundedness is linked to historicity. Dasein –understood collectively as people – only becomes what it is (that is, German) in the struggle and the effort to recover its roots in history, language, and homeland. During the twenties, and in the era of the Weimar Republic, Heidegger never explicitly addressed the meaning of what it was to be German. This remained so until the euphoric outbreak of National Socialism in 1933, a point in time where Heidegger showed a growing interest in the topic of popular groundedness (*völkische Bodenständigkeit*) in open dialogue with the politics of the conservative revolution. The emergence of National Socialism in 1933 offered Heidegger what Machiavelli called *l'occasione*: the political opportunity, the kairological occasion, the opportune moment for the German people and their leader. Beyond the writings, manifestos, and words of Heidegger, and even beyond his political intentions, one should also seek to understand his political stance within the framework of the academic conservatism of the time period, one of whose objectives consisted of reestablishing the historical roots of the German people.

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Heidegger and the Black Notebooks. The Crisis of the Question of Being in the Black Notebooks

Eugenio Mazzarella

Abstract The publication of the *Black Notebooks* has raised again the well-known *querelle* on "Heidegger and politics", or more precisely "Heidegger and Nazism", or even better "Heidegger and the Jews". However, if we accurately read the *Notebooks*, we can notice that they do not add any new information to what we already knew about Heidegger's controversial political relationship with Nazism. Rather, in the *Notebooks*, we can find Heidegger's ontological disengagement from reality (after the delusion of his rectorship of 1933), which does not have a political character. Heidegger's tone became increasingly apocalyptic, and the degeneration of power of the *Reich* was progressively becoming clearer to his eyes during the 30s. In Heidegger's historical-ontological perspective, the *Reich*, which for him had to represent a counter-power to the European crisis, was transforming into a mere version of machination, another version of that technological operative enframing calculation which was metaphysically penetrating the "present". Heidegger's assessment condemns the entire aeon of the present time – the world, life, history and the humankind – to a pure abyss of a gnostic anathema. Within this anathema, there is no hope: the only one left is confided to the mystical knowledge of those few, chosen prophets able to foresee a new beginning for the Being to come. Hence, in the *Black Notebooks*, we assist to the crisis of the question concerning the meaning of Being as it was presented in *Being and Time*, in which Being was highly characterized by the concrete, historical and existential nature of its phenomenology. But in the *Notebooks*, we cannot find anything that can serve us as an authentic "custody" for Being.

Keywords Heidegger · Nazism-Jews-Technology · Gnostic Nihilism

The "Heidegger and Nazism", "Heidegger and the Jews" *querelle*, which was raised after the publication of the *Black Notebooks*, showed only the finger pointing at the moon, rather than illuminating the true philosophical issue at stake in the *Notebooks*.

E. Mazzarella (✉)
Dipartimento di studi umanistici, Università di Napoli Federico II, Napoli, Italy
e-mail: eugenio.mazzarella@unina.it

The real problem is not the criticism of *Judaism–the historical anti-Semitism –*, which would undermine Heidegger's thought on the history of Being. Rather, as I shall aim to clarify in this paper, the real problem concerns the long ontological concealment of the *Seinsfrage* that occurs in the *Black Notebooks* from '31 to '48, as a result of "phenomenological-speculative thinking" – as Von Hermann has rightfully pointed out.[1] At its core, this has essentially nothing to do with a political or ideological kind of inspiration. Consequently, Heidegger's criticism of the "spirit of Judaism [*jüdischen Geist*]" – which in the *Notes* turns out to be marginal – has to be understood more precisely as a criticism of "the spirit of *present time* [broadly construed] as far as the latter understands itself as the spirit of the mathematical, natural sciences and modern technology."[2] Moreover, we have to bear in mind that Heidegger's criticism of the spirit of the present time emerges in a new phase, a period where Heidegger, after discovering the historical nature of Dasein and its *existentials* in *Being and Time*, decides to directly question the historical nature of Being itself. This new formula (and aim) of the *Seinsfrage* explicitly appeared in the 30s, since *Beiträge* on, in which Heidegger "does not undertake, as in *Being and Time*, an ontological analytic of Dasein and its understanding of Being, but rather he directly inquires into the historical character of Being."[3] Within this new frame, Heidegger attempts to grasp the "vertical" and "transcendent" nature of its *destinal happening,* in order to better understand the character of *Being*. Indeed, when under this light, Being, while concealing and un-concealing itself, remains the *Uncertain* (something that still needs to be grasped and gives us to think) of the horizontal, transcendental historicity, in which the Dasein of the existential analytic of '27 was essentially rooted.[4]

Thus, it is quite difficult to argue that this kind of phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective – which characterizes the entire methodology of Heidegger's *Seinsfrage* – could have been formulated, in its essential aspects, from an empirical, historical, and political ground (or even stemming from some type of ideological bias or prejudice). Rather, it would be more feasible to argue that Heidegger's perspective here implies the anti-historical – or else a-historical – disengagement from the historical (and political) concreteness in which Dasein is always immersed. Through this perspective, the personal disengagement risked embracing a negative ideology that would leave history in the hands of the obscure powers governing it. In this regard, we might agree with Löwith, who is of the belief that Heidegger's philosophical path may get trapped in the shallows of an implicit endorsement of

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[1] F.-W. Von Hermann–F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger, La verità sui* Quaderni neri, Morcelliana, Brescia 2016, 17.

[2] Ivi, 34.

[3] Ivi, 47.

[4] "In *Being and Time*, Being is conceived of as a horizontal-transcendental disclosure, as clearing (*Lichtung*) or else as truth of Being – a truth more or less original, but not historical in its nature. Now, the same truth of Being is conceived from an ontological-historical perspective, as clearing of Being in its historical holding (*Walten*) of concealing or unconcealing- namely of its withdrawing", *ibidem*.

such powers, be it for omission or convenience, and risks representing an unexpressed consent toward them. Rather, we could say that Heidegger's choice represents a full immersion into the night of actuality, in which all the cows are black. In this darkness, nothing of the present is worth his commitment. The defense of the present, in fact, would cost him to run some historical-political (and ultimately "personal") risks. Consequently, and according to Heidegger, in order to maintain a sense of dignity and self-esteem in philosophical thinking, we should avoid saying anything on the determinations of such a present, in which everything is condemned to self-annihilation; we should not even leave our work desk.[5] In an extreme synthesis, this is Heidegger's "political" position on –and apology of– his own alleged "active silence" within the *Black Notebooks*.

We would likely find these works to be of a very different context from that of the essays on the *Seinsfrage* of the '50s – such as *Frage der Technik* (the proper "late" Heidegger) –, and herein lies the core problem of the *Black Notebooks*. In the *Notebooks*, Heidegger's judgment on the aeon of the present age of technology – namely the age of that calculative and operative thinking which aims to merely appropriate beings for its own purposes – acquires a new "tone". In the *Notebooks*, we find Heidegger's new understanding of "technology", something which would be conceived of as the *telos* in the essays of the '50s, a destiny toward the forgetfulness of Being in favour of beings or, else, toward the consummation of the philosophy as a technological science.

In addition, we find a new tone in the *Notebooks,* one that radicalizes Heidegger's break with his previous historical-ontological thinking, a break, beginning in *Beiträge*, with the inquiry into the meaning of Being as pursued in *Being and Time,* through analyzing the *historical nature* of Dasein.[6] This break represents a "leap"

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[5] In *Ponderings VIII* [51], Heidegger refuses to be compared to Hans Heyse's book (*Idee und Existenz*, 1935), warning us that his philosophy shall not be misunderstood as a "philosophy of existence" and "intellectual assets of National Socialism". He notes that Hans Heyse's "ink spilling is worth the mention only because it derives from a state of these modern times which has already lost the power of thoughtful meditation and has replaced it with mere inflated phraseology". However, Heidegger avoids publicly expressing his opinion on the non-existence *in re* of a "National Socialist philosophy" ("philosophy (...) can also never be appraised "politically," (...) A "National Socialist" philosophy is neither a "philosophy" nor a service to "National Socialism"— but instead simply runs behind it as burdensome pedantry (…) To say a philosophy is "National Socialist," or is not so, means the same as to say a triangle is courageous, or is not so—and therefore is cowardly", *Ponderings V* [61]). He gives us only a private note, since "one may at most *establish* one's standpoint against this but must never throw oneself (*sich wegwerfen*) into a confrontation. Indeed, even that establishment can count only as the establishment of one's own meditation and never serve as a public disavowal of it, for even such disavowal could be used only to provide the pursuit of "spiritual life" with "novelties" and to confirm this pursuit in its alleged indispensability", *Ponderings VIII* [51]. In other words, standing against a "National Socialist" philosophy would have been, not only dangerous, but also an indirect claim of legitimacy in its philosophical and cultural claims. For an "anthology", from the *Black Notebooks*, of Heidegger' s private and philosophical distance from National Socialism and its culture, on the "secret" front of the "spiritual resistance", see. F.-W. Von Hermann–F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger, La verità sui Quaderni neri*, 131-146.

[6] In March 1932, Heidegger confesses that his entire "previous literally output" (*Being and Time*,

into "thinking", and "into" the truth of Being, namely a neat philosophical caesura with his own time. Indeed, Heidegger's tone inclines or rather even completely surrenders to the gnostic anathema of the present. It does not aim at understanding its roots,[7] which even if inscribed in the "destiny" of Being, still preserve the possibility of another "beginning". This new beginning would "take back" that beginning which is always graspable by the thought and the word that aptly correspond to it, since "where the danger is, grows the saving power also". This would thus appeal to the *generativity* of Being as *Physis* or *Aletheia*, which makes possible, through giving space to and providing with time, everything that is there. As known, Heidegger inaugurates the question of technology during his conference on this issue and concludes with his reflections in *Gelassenheit* and *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Compared to these published texts, we do not find any *reserve* for a *possible salvation* in the *Black Notes*, since "no one can leap over his own shadow" .[8]

This new situation has some consequences. It is this preserved possibility of salvation in the present – confided to thinkers and poets who, with a "hint" of word or thought, may point it out to others, to the many, and to almost everyone who is distracted –, which will make Heidegger *a thinker of technology* from the 1950s. In this guise, Heidegger inquires about the essence of technology and the kind of thinking which can never be reduced to a calculative one. Rather, the former is the

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"What is Metaphysics?, Kantbook, and "On the Essence of Ground" I and II) has become alien to him (*Ponderings II* [49]). At the time, he was still hoping for the "end of the literary existence" (*Ponderings III* [10]), as solicited by the Fuhrer, and for a political-historical rooting of the "ontological *renovatio*" enacted by (his) "spiritual National Socialism". This hope lasted for a brief time, and was translated just after *Beiträge* in 1938/1939, as the abandonment of history to its own self-destruction: "For a long time, I resisted the insight dawning on me from my asking the question of Being, the insight that technology and historiology are the same in a metaphysical sense. For I still believed historiology had struck deeper roots in history itself (cf. *Being and Time, Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, GA2* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), p. 518ff.). But there is no more avoiding this insight. The *sameness of historiology and technology* harbours the reason the human being, who pursues them and has finally granted them priority, has become intolerable to the gods and has been relegated to his distorted essence. This is now fully assisting beings to an exclusive ascendancy over the truth of Being". *Ponderings IX* [63].

[7] As will be seen in Heidegger's essays of the 50s, in which we assist to the renewal of Heidegger's reflection on the essence of technology, Heidegger breaks the *ontological darkness* of the 30-40s, reconsiders Hölderlin's poetry, and reconceives the meaning of the "double beginning" of the Greek philosophy. In particular, the "double beginning" of the Greek philosophy will explain, on the one hand, how Greek philosophy leads to the bimillennial tradition of metaphysics as an "oblivion of Being", and on the other, how it still preserves, together with the poets, another possibility, *the other beginning*. This *other beginning* is the one toward which "thinking" (the *denken* conceived of as *danken* of the "ontological gift", *Gabe*, of being in any case *in the world*) refers, even if within the necessary "metaphysical" destiny to be condemned to fall out of the *light* of Being into the false light of the rational-operative illumination of beings.

[8] As Heidegger warns us in his lecture of 1935 (in which he accuses Nietzsche of being "entangled" and confused about the concept of "value", of having "never reached the genuine centre of philosophy"), in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans G. Fried and R. Polt, Yale University Press, New Heaven & London, 2000, 214. Heidegger himself did not maintain this prescription, losing it in the ontological darkness of Being in the Treatises and *Notebooks* the historical, ontological centre (the historical character of Dasein) of the question of Being – namely, of his own proper philosophy.

human condition in its "historical" roots of *enowning* of nature *and* culture and the necessary condition of the sense and possibility for the latter. This condition, thanks to the mindful intuitions of thinkers and to the words of poets, denotes a possibility (even if opposed by the degeneration of the present age, is still *the possibility*) of a gradient of freedom from the constraints and subjugation that technology (as *Gestell*, in its enframing age) imposes over Dasein. For Heidegger as a thinker *of* technology, this freedom – an ontological possibility of that Being that is not reducible to the manipulation of beings – is not enclosed and secreted in an esoteric knowledge or in an unspeakable word. Rather, it is communicable and communicated by the "poets and (thinkers)", which is especially necessary in "desolate times".

In the *Black Notebooks*, this possibility for a salvation, which is preserved in the present time itself, and this possibility for an access to the truth of Being, even if it occurs during the age (of technology and calculation) of its oblivion – a possibility confided to poets and thinkers – is completely absent. Indeed, we might notice that in the *Notes*, poets and thinkers– who in the late Heidegger will be conceived as the guardians and witnesses of this possibility – are already mentioned. However, in these texts, they are only the witnesses who speak from the necessary "failure" of the disaster (the poets, and above all, Hölderlin). They are the ones (the thinkers) who practice some sort of divination within the apocalypse of present time, of the "once again" or better the "never have been" of the truth of Being that is still to come, when thinking will have the chance to stay "face to face" with Being. This is the "rejected stone" by builders of metaphysics, upon which the thinking of Being is still not able to give, to Being itself, a "home".

However, this dark *Stimmung* of thinking is not the same darkness that belongs to the black of the *Notebooks*, nor of the Blackshirts of that time. Rather, it is the *ontological darkness* of the *Seinsfrage* that lasted over fifteen years, in which the authenticity of Dasein cannot be found any more in the "single individual" , or in the call of a conscience which was available for everyone and no one, as can be seen in the Existential Analytic of *Being and Time*. In the *Black Notebook*s, the call of the conscience is not able to bring Dasein to the roots of its own "nothingness"– namely its inevitable, historical, and temporal exposition to its being in the world. Hence, Dasein has only accepted its roots, although it never wanted them, and it never had the chance to justify for them and for itself.

After having destroyed the illusion that the *authenticity* of the single Dasein is in *contra* to the world of *Man*, the "One" of the "social" dispersion could become broader and be grounded in the authenticity of the "people", of the "community" of workers, or else of the "spirit";[9] after having destroyed the illusion that National

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[9] On this trust to the "people", while he was becoming rector, Heidegger states: *Ponderings II* [230]: "The people: the guarding and carrying out of the empowerment of being. The empowerment out of the fearfulness of thrownness, whose first essential individuation remains precisely the people—and their great individuals. The essence of these individuals to be grasped out of and in the individuation as people". And *ivi*, [71]: "Only someone who is German can in an originarily new way poetize being and say Being". in the name of the "excited" conviction [159] that: "The world is in reconstruction; mankind is awakening."

Socialism could announce "the end of the literary existence", the singular individual cannot be called toward its authenticity *by its own self* anymore. According to Heidegger, believing that this could still be possible would mean, for Dasein, a surrendering to the philosophy of the "living experience" and to the private stigma of the "*mass individual*". This is the main reason behind why Heidegger refused any form of *philosophy of existence*, including "his own one"– something more than a misunderstanding, as can be found between the lines of the *Notebooks,* where Heidegger appears to admit in his judgments regarding *Sein und Zeit* and its reception. Hence, the individual cannot be called by its own consciousness to its authenticity but only *by Being itself*, given that the authenticity, as the truth of Being, belongs only to the Being to come. If authenticity does not belong to the "people", then it similarly does not belong to the "single". The latter is, in fact, completely shaped by the culture of its (*technological* "and" *historical*) time, and merely represents the organic individuation of his people, "Volk", even when he stands – for his own purposes – in a "directive" leading position of command and authority.

If we exclude the comprehensible reasons of personal "prudence" toward the Nazi regime, Heidegger's suggestion to conquer a new understanding of Being through silence necessarily implies that an *exoteric* dialogue on the truth of Being is ceased. Correspondingly, this also implies that the question of Being, as a *philosophical* "public fact" to be discussed in *universities* – as hoped for by a young Professor Heidegger during his time in Freiburg –, is now not at stake anymore. As a result of this new approach, Heidegger, who once known as the "thinker *of* technology" –as seen in the essays of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* –is becoming the "thinker *against* technology" and against the civilization ruled by it in the *Black Notebooks*. In a letter to Jaspers in 1949, we can read that Arendt already had a clear judgment on this. She stated: "yesterday I have read Heidegger's essays on Hölderlin and some of his lectures on Nietzsche. They are horrible and chatty. This living in Todtnauberg, grumbling about civilization and writing *Sein* with a "*y"* is really a kind of mouse hole he has crawled back into."[10]

As such, the point that I personally feel should be stressed in the *Black Notebooks* is as follows. Within the frame of Heidegger's thinking of the historical destiny of Being, the ontology of actuality (the ontology of the Being that becomes actualized as being-there, as "single" and "people" or, generally, as "age", the Being that *enowns itself* as *technology* and *calculation*) is characterized by the constant reference to a vertical falling into inauthenticity. The fall here which is at stake is not the fall of something which, falling outside itself, can always, if it comes back to its senses, return and reconnect itself to its own truth. Rather, this fall is about falling from its Unique and Only *Own Self* – which *truly and properly is*, namely the *Uncertain*, the Being to come – can only be abandoned to its own self and un-truth. As such, we can only expect the hidden revelation that the *Uncertain* – the *hidden God* who cannot have public altars – would be there. This revelation is addressed

[10] H. Arendt, K. Jaspers, *Correspondence 1926-1969*, ed. L. Kohler and H. Saner, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992,142. Letters of 29th September 1949.

only to the few to which he decides to unconceal *that he is there*, even though the world, the life, and history are witnesses against him. A revelation that can happen despite the fact that he – who is not "glorified" in the chair of the world but rather "dissipated" in it – hides himself and does *not* appear, if not through the *hint* of his *withdrawal*, which "needs a divination".

Thus, within Heidegger's furious condemnation of the present time (of its merely being-present) in its *totality*, every dimension of the historical and spiritual life "'shies away from the struggle which presses forward into the Uncertain (*ins Ungewisse*) and which knows that only through closing off and suffering can greatness be disclosed by the few and the individual."[11] In fact, the "few" and the "individuals", the *thinkers* and the *poets*, are always the only ones to carry on the "struggle" for Being and the *essential question* of it. They are the only ones *to be thrown* into that *project* which would be able to open up its "truth". On the contrary, in the calculative technological and Modern time, the ontology of actuality – or in other words, the whole historical concreteness of Being as the aeon of the present time – falls into the dimension of inauthenticity and of *das Man*, which entraps both the individual Dasein and its vital, historical nature, and the collective Dasein of the "people". As we know, early Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology aimed at analyzing the facticity of Dasein in its historical and vital nature, rescuing it from the *Entlebung* that was connoted in the transcendental and epistemological philosophies. Now, this historical, vital and lively nature of Dasein, which was transformed by Nazism into a "*dismal biologism"* (*"providing indeed the correct 'ideology' for ethical materialism"* [12]) and proposed by its "culture" as an organic circle of the spiritual life (and of the erroneous opinion that this would "would grow (and decline) like a plant"[13]), represents the presumed "spiritual" escape from the "essential" rooting and from the "face to face" with Being, which calls it the "few" and "chosen ones".

In these few, chosen ones that did not tremble in front of "the fear of the questioning thinking",[14] Dasein (if this definition still pertains to the *ones to come*), which found itself *with no reason* (*Grund*), does not have any more a historical-spiritual *foundation* (*Boden*) of an "earthing earth", the fundamental matrix that could authorize, for the time span of its *being there without any reason*, the essential reason of its finitude. This is essentially the perspective of Heidegger as the "thinker *of* technology". The being of *the ones to come* would thus appear deprived of a *Heimait* to come back to, following Hölderlin, since it has no home in any place or time, nor one in the historical-spiritual foundations of its people. The being of the ones to come does not find its *Heimait* even in any "world" or "homeland", and due to this, Heidegger, when he was still admitting the possibility for a *rooting* of beings –without claiming the possibility of giving a reason of its foundation – could celebrate a

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[11] Ponderings and Intimations III [81]

[12] Ponderings and Intimations III [81] 81

[13] Ibidem

[14] F.-W. Von Hermann–F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger, La verità sui* Quaderni neri, 94.

minor poet of "home", like Hebel. Such a "*transitional thinker*", who proposed the *"transition" to another kind of Being different from the aeon of present time*, "cannot be 'lodged' anywhere—but this homelessness is his ungrasped indigenousness in the concealed history of Being."[15] Otherwise, as Heidegger states in *Beiträge* in a less rhetorical way than in the *Notebooks*,

> The openness and grounding of the self springs shines forth from within and as the truth of be-ing (…) it is neither the analysis of human beings in another direction nor the announcing of other ways of their being – all of which is, strictly speaking, self springs forth from within and as the truth of be-ing (…) it is neither the analysis of human beings in another direction nor the announcing of other ways of their being – all of which is, strictly speaking, improved anthropology – that brings about mindfulness; but rather it is the question of the truth of being that prepares the domain of self-hood.[16]

We can say that this thesis does not invalidate any attempt to retrace the historical-ontological dimension – or an ideological support – in the *Black Notebooks* that pertain to concepts of people, race, nation, life, state – in other words, what was the essential political-moral bases of Nazism.[17] However, we should note that what this thesis revealed is the failure, within this historical-ontological thinking, of every unconcealing-opening dimension of the *existential analytic*, declaring *apertis verbis* its *ontological futility*. In fact, the only ones who "ventured to determine themselves on the basis of being",[18] who ventured to "lose their own life", and find it again within Being, were the Greeks, as they had authentically and fully accepted "[losing] the world" as the ontological questioning would require. Yet, it could be argued that not even the Greeks were able to do it properly, if we consider that "the ambiguity and the arbitrary sense of such terms (faith, knowledge, science, culture, etc.) do not represent mere oscillation within an intrinsically grounded field of

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[15] Ponderings V [62]

[16] M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning)*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1999, 47.

[17] Ivi, 37: "The self-mindfulness has left all "subjectivity" behind, including that which is most dangerously hidden in the cult of "personality" (…) Whether one understands personality as the unity of "spirit-soul-body" or whether one turns this mix upside down and then for example, puts the body first, this does not change anything in the dominating confusion of thinking that avoids every question. (…) and does one want to ground the ability to say I *biologically*? (…) Mindfulness as grounding selfhood occurs outside the doctrines just mentioned".

[18] *Ponderings X* [59]: "The decision, however, is this: whether the human being of the West gives himself over to beings as objects, or whether he attains Being as abyss and from this attains the plight of a grounding of his essence out of the assignment to being. Because such did occur in a first beginning with the Greeks—because they ventured to determine themselves on the basis of being, then that brief and unique history had to be possible as long as this venture was risked. All "blood," all "race," all "ethnicity" (*Volkstum*) is otiose and a dead end if it does not already live within a venture of being and, as venturing, set itself free for the lightning flash which strikes it where its dullness must break asunder in order to grant a place for the truth of Being, within which place Being can first be set into a work of beings". A passage of pivotal importance, as Alfieri rightfully highlights, "in which Heidegger denounces the impossibility to reach our own determination in terms of contingent factors such as the biological or ethnic-religious ones". F.-W. Von Hermann–F. Alfieri, *Martin Heidegger, La verità sui* Quaderni neri, 157.

meaning (…) but instead indicate an uprooting of the truth of Beyng—*in case a rootedness in Beyng (Seyn) itself ever did exist (our italics)."*[19]

This *ontological doubt*, if taken seriously, obscures the hypothesis of a "new beginning" that is poised to thought, as it does not merely "take back" its "other beginning" but brings forth a different beginning. A different beginning from that which brings us – through philosophy – to the technological science and to reason as "theory (operative) of reality", as already implied in the Platonic notion of *theoria* by which Heidegger analyses (starting from Plato) the Greek notion of *episteme*. Here, the "other beginning" refers to that beginning that has always been preserved since the birth of Western philosophy by the Greeks (essentially by the Presocratics), "before" their own "philosophy" (Plato and Aristotle), and by the poets – with their poetic words, which resist being transformed into a "representation" of reality. Hence, this "other beginning" is still possible and graspable for the thinking or the words that are able to remember it, as Heidegger tells us in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* and *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Rather, this new beginning is "*another* beginning", different from that which occurred until now, and which, within the self-annihilation, comes to the end of its aeon. Consequently, *another* beginning should not be understood as an ontological *renovatio*, nor a *restitution in integrum* of an original experience of Being which would function as something always available for Dasein within its care for beings and for the being which entraps it. In other words, we are referring to an "authentic" experience which has to be understood as the ability – thus echoing Heidegger's jargon of *Beiträge* – of the *identity* to *"stay" within the origin*; or else, the ability to have an *ontological*, and not merely *ontic*, *proprioception*. The *hic* and *nunc* or else the *self-perception* in an *omni-embracing dimension*, can be otherwise considered as the *fundamental* affectivity – that *grounds us* – of a *radicitus consent* to the *meaning* of our life and its *self*-perception. Instead, we should consider a *completely new beginning*, one that is entrusted to the ontological "divination" of the ones to come, as predicted in *Beiträge.*[20] This would be a kind of

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[19] *Ponderings IX* [84]: *Seyn*, the spelling – mocked by Arendt – that should indicate the Being that *had never come to language befor*e, before the call *vom Ereignis* of Professor Heidegger. A doubt regarding the incapability, which would include the Greeks' language (the Presocratics of the inceptual saying), to name Being and its "night" and mystery, had already been raised in Ponderings VIII [3]: "But the night belongs to Being and is not merely an "image" of it, a sensibilizing of something nonsensuous (…)Yet this reference to the "night" allows only an approximate intimation of how much our language as language—not merely in its separate "expressivity"—is alienated from Being—must have become alien—*because perhaps already the first—historically essential—words could not persist in the power of the Being which is to be said, and they consequently fled into beings [our italics]*. This doubt involves the ability of the language of metaphysics to express the turn of thinking about Being, a turn from the meaning of the Being of Dasein to the flash of its truth, as thematised from Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy. Or, in graphic terms, a turn from Sein to Seyn. This doubt will find its resolution only when Heidegger "conquers" the truth of Being – also for us – not only in "silence" but in a dialogue with the language of the "poets" and first inceptual "Greeks". But all this occur only after the *Black Notebooks*.

[20] "They reside in masterful knowing, as what is truthful knowing. Whoever attains this knowing-awareness is useless and has no "value"; it does not count and cannot be directly taken as a condition for the current enterprise." M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 278.

knowledge that is alien to every "pseudo-truth in what has been called 'life'" and every "pseudo-philosophy", produced by the calculative thinking.[21] This kind of knowledge, as a gamble for a new truth of Being, can appear only at a distance from the noise of mere reality, from any consent and "public" function. Thus, it is a form of knowledge that can be dared only in 'solitude' (*Eimsamkeit*), since it is just within silence (*Schweigen*) that "the sheltered history of deep stillness in and as which the mastery of the last god opens and shapes being"[22] can proceed.

Within the deep stillness that has to happen in order to create the possibility for the one to come (determined by the Being which probably "has never been"), it seems that Heidegger is going "beyond" the rare "community" of thinkers claimed by the experience of Being that is available to everyone and to no one, and that only a select few are able to see. We are going "beyond" the figure of the philosophical man (*aner philosophos*) "before" philosophy, as Heidegger taught us to see in Heraclitus – namely before his philosophical experience, which was destined to get lost in the Platonic *wonder* for Being and in the Aristotelian *orexis*, was degenerating into the *prima philosophia* of Being as such, in other words, the science of being. We are then going "beyond" the meditative thinking, which, while being detached from the mundane *routine* of "science" (conceived of as the operative theory of reality through which Dasein orientates in the world), gives unto it meaning and grounding. Better yet, we are going "beyond" the placement of this meditative thinking in the original ground of Being, as what would always descend upon us and invades our sense of selves in a sort of Panic experience. An experience of essential co-belonging in which who loses its life (self, subject, conscience, or, in sum, the self-centering of the *anthropos' ego*) can find it guarded and saved within the "whole" (total experience) with which it is fused. In the end, this is the great teaching of *Science and Meditation*, which gives us the key to read the question of technology. We are going beyond "saying yes" to the great challenge of Being in which Greeks participated, and to which thinking return, at the end of philosophy, only by abandoning the entrapping quest for a ground (*Grund*) to master. Thinking should indeed allow a re-discovering of this ground as the original foundation, *Boden*, of the *worlding* world (that appears as world and opens us to the world) that preserves the effective human foundations.

Such an *experience* of Being is the proper and essential object and aim – *Zur Sache des Denkens*[23]–that the *Seinsfrage* asks of thinking at the *end* of philosophy as its *consummation* within the technological science. According to Heidegger, this experience has a definite (and definable) ontological genealogy within the history of the spirit. It can be likened to an *ontological mysticism*, or to an *onto-phany* in which Being – namely the world, or better the *worlding* of the world – has the same role that God held in the theophany, one in which the mystic is *raised to* and *fused*

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[21] See Ponderings XI [29]

[22] M. Heidegger, *Contributions*, 25

[23] See M. Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London, 1972.

with God.[24] Like mysticism, the detachment from the world and mundane *routine* is not a condemnation, but rather seeks to represent the gaining of a salvation, within the *pietas* for its pain and for the groan that resonates in the whole creation and waits for redemption. This is the reason why mysticism and mystics never say "we, the few" or "I". The uniqueness and rarity of the mystic is seen by others as a life that lives its own mystery and belongs to a broader region, a region that the mystic himself does not see nor announce. In fact, if he did see this, he would remain entrapped in the dimension of the "I", from which he aims to be, and be called, "out".

This merging – and consequently, *infused* – participation in the fraternity of the world in its roots (the "pure kindness" that has to "stay in the heart" and in Dasein which, even if exposed to the world which brings Dasein to the world, "measures" itself against the world),[25] in the ontological non-separation, is completely missed in the onto-phany that can be traced in Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*. Here, we find an *onto-phany* entirely consigned to the false prophecy of the gnostic subjectivism that is filled with "we, the few", "I and my solitude" *against* the world, and the aeon of present time. This present is indeed originally condemned to its self-annihilation in all its ethnic, vital, historical, and cultural dimensions due to the "machination" that poisons it in its (Judaic-)Christian foundation. This poisoning machination (*Machenschaft*) is nothing but the *mechané* of the existence which rises up against Being for its own self.[26] This would namely be for the human, an all-too-human cunning that claims the infinite self-subsistence of the "I-Principle". The desire for eternal life – put at the head of the personal God of the Alliance –from the calculated cost of individual salvation in the beyond-world, which is mediated by the Son, becomes an increasingly mundane quest for a salvation within the *saeculum*. Thus, the salvation for the individual is to be found in the mundane *ascesis* of capitalism, while for the masses is to be found in the "gigantic" of technology, which divides for everyone (individual, people, race, specie) the mundane benefits of that claim to salvation. Hence, for Heidegger in the *Notebooks*, the self-ruin of the present time lies in the fact that the *Pantokrator* God does not govern the world anymore. After

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[24] It is only possible to briefly recall that within Heidegger's historical-ontological thinking, this kind of onto- (theo)-phany is what shows thinking its own aim, and the world of technology (in the historical-metaphysical terms of the onto-(ego)-logy unfolded), the last and first source of its salvation, while the danger grows.

[25] Heidegger offers us a *lectio magistralis* about our being-in-the-world also in the world of technology, by reading with Hölderlin (in "…Poetically Man Dwells…") the "technological" *daimon* of the Being-in-the-world of Dasein (which risks, in an excess of *hybris*, to withdraw the world from us, while opening it) of the chorus of Antigone in *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

[26] I suggest the reader to confront Heidegger's "Anaximander's saying" (in which, according to Heidegger, we find the knowledge of the "authentic" position of Dasein within Being of its being amidst-itself while being-not-itself, while courageously facing the truth of beings within Being in Anaximander's saying and not within the "Christian" consolations for an economy of salvation) with *Ponderings II* [54] "I would give entire many-voluled "philosophies" for the single hard statement of Anaximander—even if only because this one statement compels us, i.e., compels us to examine whether and to what extent we summon up the power to *understand* or, in other words, to be at home *in* the questioning of being and therein to consent *to* being."

having created and ruled the world, God has deprived it of its divinity and self-subsistence, an aspect which the Greeks were preserving in the epiphany of their gods. He has come to inhabit the world through the human being, he "became man", and more specifically, he became the man who "invented" Himself in the nihilistic insurrection against Being. Christianity furnishes, with its "economy of salvation", the proper "theology" toward "the outrageous timidity before Being, in the mistaken regulation of beings in their most proximate usefulness"[27]of *technology* and machination (*Machenschaft*). Through these, the human being attempts to escape from the anxiety that is provoked by the question of Being, posed to his own life, by reducing Being to a mere being, in order not to "suffer and bear" its *truth*: the thunderbolt steers the destiny of his life. A theology that has annihilated the godhood of that world, and is governed by the thunderbolt of the enowning, the godhood of gods, was one which only the Greeks were able to see and hold.[28] Indeed, this kind of theology has fully developed, in its own *ecumene* –the Greek-(Judaic)-Christian West, which is historically ruled by the Catholic Church – "the [Greek] pre-supposition of *Christianity* is the postulation of the human being as a rational animal, thus is perseverance and refuge in "metaphysics" .[29] "The danger of Christianity" does not consist in its beliefs and proffered truth, "but rather in the ambiguity of its affirmation of this world", and in its need and hope of a beyond.[30] For that, the Christian man is nothing else than an ecumenic consummation, within the European history, of the metaphysical man, as "the human being [that] no longer wants a *beginning* but, instead, merely takes refuge in what follows from one."[31]

Christianity led to a "deformation" of the fundamental metaphysical position, one that "sanctifies" life by considering it as the right to own itself in the acceptance of the world (in the form of individuals, in the configuration of peoples and nations).[32] Under this light, Christianity represents the antithesis of the thinking, which looks at its own time as the apocalypse in which the *anástasis* can be announced – an *anástasis* from an age where Being was lost, and had crucified itself on the cross of Nothing for sake of a radically new age to come. In this *anástasis*, the thinker is asked to abandon every previously known anthropology for the sake of Being, or to abandon the humanization process which gave room for the possibility of the oblivion of Being in favour of beings. This *anástasis* is not a mere *deutéra parousía*, nor is it a *re-novatio* of the *presentifying* character of present time that

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[27] Ponderings and Intimations III [135]

[28] See *Ponderings X* [59]

[29] Ponderings XII [4]

[30] Ponderings X [30]

[31] Ponderings XII [1]

[32] *Ponderings XII* [9]: "right is then the power of the victor (…) the "right" of precisely this victor to his own "life." But inasmuch as "one's own life" has long been identified as that of self-reliant humanity (in the form of individuals, in the configuration of peoples and nations), this "highest" right to life becomes at the same time a "holy" right. This would apply not only terminologically, but also in the mode of thinking and valuing, the basic metaphysical position thereby proliferates (and so does its Christian deformation).

recovers the immanent *presentness in its origin* and *behind its shoulders*. Rather, this *anástasis* represents the *parousía* of a *éteron* from the entire aeon of present time, of its own *nihilistic* genesis, in which the Being, from the beginning, came to be among beings as their Nothing. From this "coming" which happens in the present, Being remains irredeemable. That is the reason why thinking can just turn its back while leaping into the *other* Being to come, which is the *very* proper and true Being that has never come yet.

The thinker of this gnostic *anástasis* of Being, conquered with his questioning, has to remain in a silent vigil of waiting – akin to a sort of parody of the evangelical virgins. This represents a leap into the abyss which has nothing to do with the "psychology" of the philosopher. The philosopher is indeed, precisely "through the unsettling which derives from Being, constantly *torn away* from that to which even he is referred, namely, his anthropomorphizing in everyday humanity."[33] He is torn away from any type of anthropomorphism, anthropologizing of beings, and anthropomorphizing of the human being, from every flight into the "life" in terms of merely lived experience of itself as its fundamental need, from any known home of men ,[34] "to be a thinker means to know that the thinking which disclosively questions the decision is not only in its consequences 'inimical to life' but has in its essence decided against 'life' (…) as a title for beings as a whole which, regardless of their beingness, assert themselves through the execution (displayed before themselves) of the continual surpassing of their current state to a greater power—i.e., a more instituted and more calculative power."[35] According to Arendt, if we are to understand Heidegger's "human condition", we shall see how Heidegger's conceptual oversimplification of Christianity, as the nihilistic core of the West which represents the decline of Being in favour of being, of the being we always are, occupies many pages in the *Black Notebooks*, with increasing exasperation. The decline of the West is not merely *ontological* – a pure speculation –, but rather consists in *the decline of the meaning of our own life and time*, in which the self-withdrawal of Being represents only the mask of the public and individual Dasein which, at this point, has become indecipherable. Hence, this Dasein has nothing remaining but the vigil for the apocalypse. In fact, according to Heidegger, in a world which is already nihilistically out of joint – "the "world" is out of joint; it is no longer a world or, said more truly — it never was a world. We are standing only in its preparation"[36]–, nothing else can be done aside from waiting, "secured in itself—for the coming famine

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[33] Ponderings XI [44]

[34] *Ponderings XIII* [7]: ""*Anthropomorphism*." – How are all the anthropologizing (*Vermenschlichung*) of beings and every anthropomorphizing (*Vermenschung*) of the human being to be overcome in a radical way? Only through the grounding of the human being in his most abyssal essence – i.e., in the stewardship of Being. Here the human being first attains the highest freedom toward himself—; here no redemption (*Er-lösung*) is needed, just as little as is its counterpart (*Gegenspiel):* flight into the "life" that merely has a lived experience of itself".

[35] Ponderings XII [10]

[36] Ponderings IV [7]

of the spirit—after the desolate starvation through feeding on chaff",[37] and embracing "destruction (*Zerstörung*)" as "the precursor of a concealed beginning", and "devastation (*Verwüstung*)" as the "after effect of an already decided end."[38]

This waiting is only possible with the prudency of the German philistine, through relegating and hiding all the ontological passions in the *Notebooks* and choosing an active silence on the question of Being, while awaiting the end of times. Heidegger, becoming a hidden and solitary Baptist of the new beginning of Being – that will come and reveal itself to us in an epiphany –, suggests we abandon the world-anxiety (which "has long since been overcome in a fundamental way"), and "leave the field to the deepest anxiety: *the anxiety in the face of Being*."[39]

As such, according to Heidegger, we should free ourselves from taking any position within the far-too-human anxiety which occurs before our own death as the struggle for our own affirmation within the "history" – a bare, exposed being-in-the-world – in which individuals, people, and nations are struggling. Or to otherwise free ourselves from the superhistorical anguish of their "groan" in the creation.

A "separation", a "*Stimmung*" that can be thought of as a gnostic invocation for a purifying catastrophe of the times[40] while we wait for a new ontological human kind,[41] "capable" of Being or, in a parody of Saint Paul's words, of a resistance "in this world but not of this world" – "These resisters must be steadfast *in* their time outside of this time"[42] – during the "time" in the solitude of the wait as a type of "ontological grace."[43] This represents a pure gnostic subjectivism that completely collapses in on itself, whereas it believes to leap *into* Being. This is a *gnosis* of the *distorted essence* of being in the world – a sort of cosmic-historical Leopardian "to

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[37] Ponderings and Intimations III [133]

[38] Ponderings XII [1]

[39] Ponderings XII [47]

[40] *Ponderings VII* [75]: "Even an occurrence such as the "world war" was not capable of anything, despite the "hells" into which humans were then drawn, despite the sacrifices and also the upswings, which were mostly accomplished in secret. The world war was not capable of anything, if we think out to the essential upheaval of humans; on the contrary, it became a preparatory school for basing the trappings of the self-instituting human being still more decisively, completely, and readily on the self-securing of his current essential state"; *Ponderings XIV* p.113: "Therefore, *all* imperialism is *conjointly*, i.e., in reciprocal increase and subsidence, pursued to a *highest consummation of technology*. The final chapter of this consummation will consist in the earth itself blowing up and the current humanity disappearing. That will not be a misfortune but, instead, the first purification *of being* from its most profound deformation on account of the supremacy of beings"; *Ponderings XV* p. 4: "The *animal rationale*, having arrived at its distorted essence, is now set into a topspin in a *danse macabre*."

[41] *Ponderings V* [45]: "Will those *stronger* ones arrive, those who in advance thoughtfully master the mystery of Being itself *in such a way* that future humans may find their centre therein?"

[42] Ponderings VII [37]

[43] *Ponderings XI* [40]: "For one cannot "make" or even "will" solitude—solitude is most rare and is a necessity of being—insofar as being, in its abysses, bestows itself on the Dasein of the human being. Therefore what "one" can "make" is at most a preparation of *knowing* that only a transformation of being as such, i.e., an overcoming of the age of the complete abandonment by being, will open up the *possibility* of solitary humans as ones who ground and essentially bear".

me life is evil" view– which, however, does not withdraw itself from the world, since also the Being to come, similarly to the biblical God, who needs its Ezekiel, needs a "living" prophet who can praise it. Thus, the central theme of the *Black Notebooks* is not a renovated question – as if it could be something that can be renovated in its fundamental terms and in light of the evidences offered in the Notes – about "Heidegger and politics", "Heidegger and Nazism" or "Heidegger and the Jews". Rather, the central issue at stake would be the *gnostic darkening* of the question of the meaning of Being upon which Heidegger's *Seinsfrage*, from the Platonic exergue in *Being and Time,* wanted to shed light upon. However, thankfully for both us and him, the late Heidegger, or the very "last" Heidegger – who does not correspond to the Heidegger of the latest publication of the *Black Notebooks* – overcame his ontological crisis of the'30s and '40s. After that decade, Heidegger shed a new light on the question of Being, one that is arguably the only one worth being studied, along the thread of the inescapable *historical* character of the question of Being. A question that immerses *us* completely in the waves of nature and history, or otherwise remains a pure *vacatio – vacuum* and vacation– of thinking.

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On the Hidden Roots of our Time. The Secret Thought of Heidegger's "Black Notebooks"

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Costantino Esposito

Abstract The paper focuses on the problematic pattern of the *Black Notebooks* in a crucial and dramatic period of Heidegger's course, that is the one between the thirties and the forties of the last century. In particular, (a) Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism will be outlined (from "barbaric" to "spiritual" to "vulgar") and (b) the interpretation of World Judaism and (c) modern Christianity (a real hendiadys) as a figure of nihilism, namely that of fulfilled metaphysics. From the implication of these three elements, the fundamental feature of the Notebooks can thus be found. This critical reconstruction aims to survey the trend, which is widely present in the philosophical literature of the last decades of the XXth century, of a post-metaphysical and post-Christian (commonly "post-modern") image of Heidegger's thought. The paper intends to replace the core of the unsolved tangle of his thought: the broken confrontation with modernity and his clinch with the Cristlichkeit. It could be said that what appeared to be solved to him was the possible future of his presence in the philosophy of our time.

Keywords Heidegger · Black Notebooks · History of metaphysics · Nihilism · National Socialism · World Judaism · Modern Christianity · Postmodern thought

1   The Thirties/Forties: A Stratified Period in Heidegger's Course

The transition from the thirties to the forties is, without a doubt, a critical moment in the evolution – or, according to someone, in the involution – of Heidegger's thought. The documents, which were gradually published in the last thirty years of the *Gesamtausgabe,* have been a contribution focusing not only on the factors of

C. Esposito (✉)
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy
e-mail: costantino.esposito@uniba.it

continuity or discontinuity in Heidegger's thoughts in comparison to the twenties (with *Sein und Zeit* being the culmination of that work), but also served as a comparison for the following period (from the fifties until the seventies), thus serving to illustrate a sort of a multilayer stratification of his thoughts within the same period of time.

If we look beyond the surface of Heidegger's works (public and private, exoteric and esoteric) of the thirties and forties, three levels should be considered, as these have already been naturally implied and strictly correlated among them. However, each of these levels follows a peculiar way, method, and language.

1. The first level is that of the courses and essays published by Heidegger himself (even if most of them in the following years), in which the extremes should be considered; this would be the conference *On the Essence of Truth* from 1930, and the *Letter on «Humanism»* to Jean Beaufret in 1946. These are the years in which there is a «turning» of thought, that has been elaborated in *Being and Time* following the direction of thinking of History of being (Beyng) or the truth of being as an event. Moreover, these are the years when he held a political-academic commitment as Rector of the University of Freiburg, which was assumed as much to be a commitment of philosophical thinking, as was documented in «The Self-Assertion of the German University» of 1933.

From this point of view, and in relation to the investigation and teaching the thirties, Heidegger's extraordinary effort in trying new paths throughout and beyond the metaphysical tradition can be seen. It is relevant to note that this happened after the failure of his political commitment and his disillusion with the hopes he had placed in the National Socialist movement, which he had considered to hold a possibility for the spiritual rescue of the German people – or maybe just for this reason. This direction is evident in the course of 1935 (which was published in 1953) that was entitled *Introduction to Metaphysics.* Moreover, some writings of the first thirties could also be found to be relevant, such as *Plato's Doctrine of Truth* (published in 1942) and the conference on *The Origin of the Work of Art* (pronounced in Freiburg in 1935). In 1936, Heidegger held another famous conference, this time in Rome that dealt with *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry, which* will flow into the volume on Hölderlin's poetry of 1944. Alongside Hölderlin, Kant, Schelling and above all – insistently – Nietzsche, held scenes with important academic courses of these years (the writings on Nietzsche will be then collected in the homonym work published by Heidegger in 1961).

2. The second level of the period between the thirties and the forties is the layer represented by Heidegger's elaboration of a series of treatises which were clearly thought of as attempts to pass from the «first beginning», that is metaphysics, to the «new beginning» of thought. The period of 1936–38 was when *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* were drafted, a work that has seen been considered as a stronghold (besides *Being and Time*) of Heidegger's research path, and a work that the author had decided to publish posthumously, only after the publication of all his academic courses in a complete edition of his writings (to be pub-

lished in 1989). It was attempted like an experiment, especially on a linguistic-conceptual level, which remained as an undertone, occasionally appearing during some academic courses. Indeed, Heidegger continued to analyze this till the mid-Forties and, after different problematic directions, he drafted – "esoteric" – a series of four Treatises, in which he deepened and rethought about in different perspectives – better to say, different «compaginations» or «fugues» – the philosophical matrixes exposed in the *Contributions*. Heidegger himself had decided to publish these writings in the 3rd section of «Gesamtausgabe», which included his «Unpublished writings», with the titles of *Meditation* (1938/39), *On the Beginning* (1941), *The event* (1941/42) and *The pathways of the beginning* (1944). To these treatises, and straightly linked to *Contributions*, two further ones should be added, and these are thematically close, such as *The Overcoming of Metaphysics* (1938/39) and *The History of Being* (1938/40).[1]

3. However, the multiple layers and the stratifications of Heidegger's work and writings widen and radicalize through the continuous drafting of the now-famous «Black Notebooks» from 1931 till 1951 (at least for those which were published posthumously in 2014, which included his thoughts until the beginning of the seventies). It is a very tight series of «ponderings», «hints» and «notes» through which Heidegger's thought goes across, assesses, and is provoked by the dramatic events of the National Socialist German history (his Rectorate included) until the post-war collapse of the Reich.[2]

It is possible to say that the *Black Notebooks*, or at least those at the turn of the decade between the thirties and the forties, were not comprehensible as a standalone, rather, they served more as the routes that matched and completed the paths opened and tried by the Treatises. For this reason, and as stated in Heidegger's will, they had to close the complete edition of his writings, and consider that the thought of the history of Beyng will continue until the seventies – with the Notebooks proceeding in parallel.[3] However, what is this complementary and parallel route (with regard to the one, "secret" by itself, of the treatises)? On the one hand, it could be said that *Ponderings* «are coordinate and subordinate to the big works opening

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[1] Information on Heidegger's decision was reported by his Assistant and main editor of «Gesamtausgabe», F.-W. von Herrmann, in the Post-scriptum in *Besinnung*, GA 66, pp. 433–434. These treatises were already published in the Complete Work, except for *Die Stege des Anfangs* (The Paths of Beginning).

[2] A first series of Notebooks, those from 1931 to 1941 (in 3 volumes) are called «Ponderings» (*Überlegungen*); those going from 1942 to 1951 (in 2 volumes) are called »Annotations» (*Anmerkungen*). Nevertheless it is known that further several Notebooks were drafted by Heidegger until the early seventies, with different titles, and whose publishing is expected in five further volumes (for a total of 34 Notebooks). While 5 volumes are already published in the «Gesamtausgabe», 4 other volumes are expected: *Vier Hefte* (*Four Notebooks*, *GA* 99); *Vigiliae* and *Notturno* (*GA* 100); *Winke* (*Intimations*, *GA* 101); *Vorläufiges* (*Provisionals*, *GA* 102).

[3] Cf. von Herrmann (2016, p. 33).

the way, and thus not preordinate nor even superordinate to them»,[4] and therefore the key to understand the *Notebooks* would be in the works which are more systematic – or if you want, more «patterned» – and that concern the new beginning of thought, the event of appropriation, and the link metaphysics-nihilism.

Nevertheless, in the text of the *Notebooks,* a feature justifies the opening of the problem: in it, Heidegger, while developing the thought, continuously crosses it, and not incidentally, with reactions, evaluations, considerations – between the sharp and the painful, the resentful and the scornful – regarding both political and academic events, cultural and religious trends, public figures and human types of his world. These were strongly signed by National Socialism, but always in the perspective of Western destinal history.

However, we are looking at something beyond a mere criticism of culture or a socio-anthropological analysis, and above all, is something different from a call to ethical responsibility: Heidegger's ambition and grief stems from the task of having to go through the spiritual crisis of the German people and the world, thanks to a radical philosophical quest which could, upon a critical analysis, reveal the history of the world as the history of Beyng itself. For Heidegger, understanding its own time means suffering the loss of the truth of Beyng and protecting it in that solitude, which is typical of the authentic «thinker» in whom, by his opinion, may grow the roots of an epoch, even in the progressive decay of its spiritual expressions.

The perception is that in his critic-deconstructive attitude, Heidegger proceeds more freely and unconventionally that he does in his courses, essays or discourses, and in the treatises as well. This also means that he has more freedom to face, with no hesitations, the historical situation and the current chronicles of cultural, academic and political context.

This led someone to hypothesize that the Treatises or Heidegger's other works were not the keystone to understanding the *Black Notebooks*. On the contrary, the latter may be the secret key (esoteric, hidden) of the former. That is, Heidegger's thought may be interpreted as a way to render in a (meta) metaphysical key, and in the perspective of the thought of the history of Beyng, some basic political or cultural decision of the author's.

The initial mediatic noise about a presumed "antisemitism" of the metaphysical-destinal kind that emerges from the *Notebooks,*[5] now has given way to a motivated philosophical (and political) evaluation of those texts. This makes some questions necessary, particularly those which concern the meaning behind the entirety of Heidegger's course:

(a) Which is the link between the *Notebooks*, the writings, and the public discourses, along with the Treatises of the Thirties-Forties? The hypothesis is that they may be read as the 'hidden soil' – like an abyss – in which the radical need seeks to abandon modern thought (*that is* Judaic, *that is* Christian) and to reformulate in an absolutely new phrasing of the metaphysical question – though in

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[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] Cf. Trawny (2014, p. 23) and Di Cesare (2016, pp. 227–229).

this sense no-more-metaphysical – on being, a ground which will nourish the philosopher's exoteric discourses. From this point of view, the *Notebooks* document Nietzsche's permanent inspiration within Heidegger's thought, not only in relation to the revival of certain themes pertaining to Nietzsche's thought, but in a way that will remain faithful to the event of nihilism, as the way in which the truth of being is revealed to our time.

(b) How is Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism shaped in the *Notebooks*? The hypothesis is that this is not viewed from a historical-political context, but also from the call of the time – for better or for worse, regardless of how it may have been perceived by the philosopher during the years – to the *historical* truth of being.

(c) With regard to *Being and Time*, but also to Heidegger's writings from the fifties, can the *Black Notebooks* serve as a temporary moment in a tragic reaction – one that occurred after the sinking of a political-academic commitment – which will be later overcome through the development of his thought?[6] Or are they a sort of permanent counterpoint, or perhaps a steady shadow of his whole course?

(d) Does the transition from the thirties/forties – just like its issues, particularly from the *Black Notebooks* – demand the interpreters to correct or revise any points in the reading perspectives followed thus far, especially in relation to Heidegger's thought?

This paper will focus on certain elements which seem useful toward the answering of these questions. In particular, Heidegger's relationship with National Socialism will be outlined (from «barbaric» to «spiritual» to «vulgar») and the interpretation of World Judaism and modern Christianity (a real hendiadys) as a figure of nihilism, namely that of fulfilled metaphysics. Within the convictions that could be construed from the implication of these three elements, the fundamental feature of the Notebooks can thus be found.

2   The Disillusion of National Socialism

It is worth starting from the philosophical-political feature which appealed to the attention of readers thus far. These same readers expected a greater clarification from the Notebooks regarding the relationship between Heidegger's thought and National Socialism. However, the writings show the development, in a step-by-step process, of the philosopher's crossing of paths and his progressive, resolute *detachment* from the Nazi project and regime.[7] The fact is that this detachment held a resentful tone of disillusion, just like an expectation that was unfounded. Furthermore, it was unfounded, we should add, not for what was expected but for the radical inadequacy of those from those who spearheaded these views.

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[6] Cf. Mazzarella (2018, pp. 79–80).

[7] For the context of this development see Nolte (1992, chap. IX).

National Socialism, in his «essential trait», was deemed to be a «barbaric principle»,[8] that is to say – and as highlighted by Heidegger on multiple occasions– a principle opposing the decay of the bourgeois spirit (well expressed by positivism, by historicism, and neo-Kantianism); as well as opposing the spiritual value of Christian tradition, both Catholic and Protestant. Its «possible greatness» would consist of this barbaric character of National Socialism. Thus, the «barbarity» stands for an *ambiguous* notation, but it was not without positive traits. In fact, «The danger is not National Socialism itself – but, rather, its trivialization into a sermon on the true, the good, and the beautiful». What could have been a moment that involved a radical break from the organized forces of «modern» world – the technical science, the American liberalism, the Soviet communism, Christian religion, and everything that was reduced to a calculating thought and to the forgetfulness of being –, ended up becoming too much of an ideology and a political practice that followed «the traditional "logic" of common thinking and of the exact sciences».

The fact that Heidegger's philosophy was shaped and even founded on his contiguity to Nazism finds textual denial in the *Black Notebooks* (and this interesting, as the *Notebooks* were thought to hold decisive proof that could condemn Heidegger as a plain «Nazi»[9]). The political and cultural conditioning of that time is out of the question, surely, as for any thinker. However, one could assume the opposite, that Heidegger had considered – even through his proximity and his initial joining National Socialism – the *irreducibility* of his philosophical work to this political phenomenon. This, in turn, did not mean that Heidegger's thought was simply apolitical or anti-political, but that he (wrongly or rightly) pretended to find *metaphysical* strengths in secretly determining the fate of a people and the arrangements of a State. He got there through initially consorting and then separating from the National Socialist ideology, but from separating the strengths and political ideologies that could be viewed as an alternative to Nazism. However, in the case of the former, the distance was borne from the fruit of deception rather than an outright opposition to a principle.[10]

It is arguable that this position resulted from the failure of his claim to be the spiritual leader of the National Socialist movement, an ideology which began with his positing in the University; and could be even viewed as a frustrated project to a «metaphysical» justification. However, regardless of whether this component is indubitably present, it still does not explain everything. On the contrary, it explains little with regard to Heidegger's further and more radical claim regarding the silent truth of being, which is regularly forgotten by political machinations (another reduced form of modern spirit, as science or religion). This is not to be simply labelled as a «reactionary» or «right-wing» position alone, as the «reminding» returns to the truth of being and the spiritual destiny of the people that Heidegger

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[8] For this quotation and the following see GA 94, p. 194; *Ponderings and Intimations III*, in *Black Notebooks 1931/1938*, p. 142.

[9] See V. Farias (1987, part III) and, in a much more extreme way, Faye (2005, chap. IX). See also Losurdo (1991, chap. VII).

[10] For this reading direction see Pöggeler (1999, pp. 207–213).

had to deal with. Rather, it is something which cannot be assimilated to the ideology of pure political conservation; in addition, his purpose stemmed from the view that the thought of the history of being has a much deeper «revolutionary» trigger than the National Socialist revolution or Russian communism.

Therefore it is relevant to note that Heidegger had mentioned a «Spiritual National Socialism», and this was to be understood not in a «theoretical» sense (in opposition to a practical-organizational National Socialism), but as the need «to *bear up* with the spiritual demands, even if this aspiration is so often and so easily ridiculed from above as something supplementary».[11] Such needs should be leveraged to draw upon the unique possible meaning of spiritual National Socialism. This was thought to serve in fulfilling a real spiritual program, one that followed a sequence of steps, which Heidegger explains as follows:

> «The *proper, but most remote goal*: the historical greatness of the people in the effectuation and configuration of the powers of being. / The *more proximate goal*: the *coming to themselves* of the people on the basis of their rootedness and their assuming of their mission through the *state*. / The *most proximate goal*: the provisional creation of the community of the people – as the *self* of the people. Work and leadership [Führung]. / The *most proximate goal of all*: the capacity of *all* countrymen for *Dasein* and for work – creation of the joy of work and of the new will for *work*».[12]

Where, in this path, «resides» – Heidegger wonders – «our most proper task»? It consists of (attuning what he had proposed in his rectoral address) «the creation of the new claim to knowledge in the postulation of the new way of seeking and questioning», that is «the awakening of the will to knowledge», to prevent the danger that this spiritual course may be captured «into the fixed domains of the world of Christian thought and of the previous Western-modern technological science».[13]

Spiritual National Socialism, if there is one, won't be but the philosophical guide oriented by Heidegger himself (certainly not by the 'mental laborers' sympathizing or joining the political movement). This will even make him suppose that « [t]he danger that the movement might become something bourgeois is in essence nullified», just because the spirit and the culture of bourgeoisie «are destroyed by a spiritual National Socialism».[14]

Nevertheless, in the same Notebook, Heidegger similarly notes that « [o]ne can already speak today [*between 1933 and 1934* TN] of a "vulgar National Socialism"», the one which is diffused by «newspaper reporters and makers of culture […] naturally under a brainless appeal of Hitler's Mein Kampf», whose «doctrine of history and of humanity» is a mere «ethical materialism». This one does not consist of the law of living life to the full and of sensual pleasure, but it is to be conceived as «a

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[11] GA 94, p. 135; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 99.

[12] GA 94, p. 136; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 100, italic by H.

[13] GA 94, pp. 136–137; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 100.

[14] GA 94, p. 136; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 99.

deliberate contrast to Marxism and its *economic*-materialistic conception of history».[15]

This is how vulgar National Socialism had become for the «people» in Heidegger eyes: an ethical materialism, equal and contrary to the materialistic economy propagated by the Marxist, to which now «a *dismal biologism* [racial] [is] providing indeed the correct "ideology"»[16] – a phenomenon which was paradoxically «little-bourgeois», without any spiritual dignity. Yet, would had it been able to preserve this dignity, or even foresee it, when for example Heidegger (two years prior) had recommended his brother Fritz to read Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to catch the true possibility of saving Europe?[17] Perhaps, as long as it was directed to what Heidegger had pointed out to be the spiritual destiny of the Germans – the preservation of the truth of being that snatched up Christian thoughts and technical plans of the world –, which were aspects that defined the spirit of modern times to him. This would mean that (his) philosophy moved from claiming to lead the political movement into one that turns into a spiritual counter-movement:

> «As soon as a philosophy has reached the question of the essential occurrence of beyng –
> and only then will it be justified in bearing this name – it must necessarily think counter to
> its own epoch. The one thing philosophy is not, and never can be, is the "expression" of its
> epoch grasped in thoughts».[18]

Clearly, and in accordance with Hegel's famous assertion (even if in an opposite sense), for which philosophy was its own time comprehended in thoughts, Heidegger points out that this opposition to its times «does not arise from any sort of deficiencies or defects in the epoch, but instead derives from the [very] essence of philosophy». In fact:

> «[...] always, but especially then and indeed by essence, the productive thinking of the truth
> *of beyng* leaps *ahead* of all instituting, preserving, and restoring of *beings* – ahead of all
> immediate creation and work. Therefore, philosophy – assuming it actually is such – can
> also never be appraised "politically," neither in an affirmative or negative direction».[19]

More radically, to say that the philosophy was «National Socialist» in nature would be a farce as it would be «the same as to say a triangle is courageous, or is not so – and therefore is cowardly». It is to be noticed that Heidegger here draws on – of

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[15] GA 94, p. 142; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 104.

[16] GA 94, p. 143; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 105.

[17] Heidegger's letter to his brother, Fritz, (18th December 1931) stated: "It seems that Germany is rising, comprehending and grasping its destiny. I strongly wish that you may confront yourself with Hitler's book [*Mein Kampf*], which even it is weak in the first autobiographical chapters. Nobody can sensibly disagree with the fact that this man owns, and always did, a certain political instinct and out of the ordinary, while all of us were clouded. The National Socialist movement will get many other strenghts in the future. It is no longer matter of a little policy of a party – but of the rescue or the sunset of Europe and of Western culture. Whoever, even now, does not catch it, is worth of crumbling in the caos": in Homolka, Heidegger (2016, pp. 21–22).

[18] GA 94, p. 348; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 253.

[19] This quotation and the following, GA 94, p. 348; *Ponderings II-VI*, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, pp. 253–254.

course, in his own way – to the great tradition of German Idealism. This was not for a common reflection on the political-government of spiritual destiny of Germany; neither does he aim to part what is «German» from what is not (or is Aryan or «Jewish»). On the contrary and paradoxically, it was for a shared attitude to gamble philosophical thinking *against* that present in his own time. Thus, this was also against the traditions and institutions of a given epoch.

This leads to the question on how to evaluate the entirety of this course. Compromise, illusion, error of evaluation, separation… these are all attitudes which were probably coexistent since the beginning of Heidegger's proceeding, even if it held different balances at varying points in time.[20] One thing is certain: he never disagreed with National Socialism «in principle»; rather, his disagreement was with the result of a later examination. Indeed, this detachment presents and even deepens the philosophical principle which had justified his previous joining. National Socialism, as aforementioned, appeared to hold a possibility (while barbaric) to end the decay of the modern-Christian-bourgeois world. However, it was soon proven that this was to be a fulfillment of that world. Many wonder – and with good reason – why, aside for some private memories and meta-political considerations, has Heidegger never clearly recognized his mistake in public.[21] Indeed, what is more dramatic and the cause of incertitude is that, to him, such a self-criticism could have been simply inconceivable on a philosophical level, for the «failure» of his philosophical-academical course appeared to him as a sign *tout court* of the destiny of his own epoch. Besides, with regard to destiny, no self-criticism is admitted; rather, it motivated a harder commitment of thought in searching for the abyss of his time.

This does not «to justify» Heidegger *a priori* on his personal choices and for his philosophical thought. On the contrary, this can serve at detecting a point, albeit a dark one, in which the question of being becomes the destiny of the history of Beyng. To summarize, as of 1939, Heidegger evaluated his course as follows:

> «Thinking purely "metaphysically" (i.e., in heeding the history of beyng), during the years 1930–1934 I saw in National Socialism the possibility of a transition to another beginning and interpreted it that way. Thereby I mistook and undervalued this "movement" in its genuine powers and inner necessities as also in the extent and kind of its greatness. What starts there, and specifically in a much more profound – i.e., more comprehensive and drastic—way than in Fascism, is the consummation of modernity –. The consummation had indeed more or less started in "romanticism" – with respect to the anthropomorphizing of the human being in his self-certain rationality – but the actual consummation requires the

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[20] Heidegger's political disillusion with regard to National Socialism has been also interpreted as the sunset of a "utopian" perspective of realization of the Greek polis in the Germans' state: see F. Fistetti, *Heidegger e l'utopia della polis*, in part. pp. 72 ss.

[21] In one of the Notebooks of "Annotations" dating the Mid-Forties, Heidegger will write: "The real mistake by the "Rectorate 1933″ was not much in evaluating that I, as some other more intelligent subjects, had not recognized "Hitler" in his "essence" and then, together with them, had resentfully put myself aside in the circle of those who are lacking of will - that is the same circle of those who have it -; rather it lied in my thinking that it had come the time to become initial - historical, not with Hitler, but through people's awakening in his Western destiny": GA 97, p. 98.

decisiveness of what is historiological-technological in the sense of the Complete "mobili-
zation" of all the capacities of self-reliant humanity».[22]

From reasons that can be assumed as a self-certitude (which Heidegger connotes as
a «romantic» character of Western spirit) to a technique that always implied a
defined historiographic perspective of the world, National Socialism was one of the
moments when, not an «inhuman», but a humanity finds in itself its absolute mea-
sure. However, by the end of the war, Heidegger will reconduct National Socialism
and Hitler's policy to one of the determining features – even if not the most the radi-
cal or ultimate reason – of German wreckening.

3   Judaism – Christianity

Heidegger's thought has always risked being reconstructed from the perspective of
what his interpreters from time to time – moreover, this replicates the risk that
Heidegger himself assumes for the authors that he interprets. In the case of the
Black Notebooks, this risk becomes more evident. They would have been an impor-
tant source for experts that are trying to reconstruct Heidegger's course (as well as
the contemporary treatises that have already been published with no mediatic noise),
if not for the fact that the *Notebooks* presented passages dealing with Judaism, and
«World Judaism» (*Weltjudentum*), and its responsibilities within the history of
metaphysics.[23] Consequently, this leads to the question of what is the question topic.

First, the Jews are a group of people who have experienced a people's *uprooting*
from their soil as a paradigm, but also an uprooting from the essential foundation of
history. This context serves as the basis for Heidegger's analysis of what he consid-
ers a hidden but essential event of our time: «*What is now happening* is the *ending*
of the history of the great beginning of Western humanity»,[24] an end marked by the
struggle between what is essentially historical, as it protects the truth of beyng, and
what *has no history* (though carrying the mask of the most «wild» historiography),
and limiting itself in representing the being within the form of «machination». Here
enters Judaism:

> «The "victor" in this "struggle," which contests goallessness pure and simple and which can
> therefore only be the caricature of a "struggle," is perhaps the greater groundlessness
> [*Bodenlosigkeit*] that, not being bound to anything, avails itself of everything (Judaism).
> Nevertheless, the genuine victory, the one of history over what is a-historical, is achieved
> only where what is groundless excludes itself because it does not venture beyng but always
> only reckons with beings and posits their calculations as what is real».[25]

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[22] GA 95, p. 408; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 318.

[23] What follows will reconsider some of the reflections propagated in C. Esposito, *Heidegger,
l'ebraismo e il cristianesimo nei "Quaderni neri"*.

[24] GA 95, p. 96; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 75.

[25] GA 95, pp. 96–97; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, pp. 75–76.

Just like the interpreter of this groundless and history-less machination, Judaism is grounded on an emphasis that calculates, for its forms, its «gigantic» or the «huge» (*das Riesige*): «One of the most concealed forms of the *gigantic,* and perhaps the oldest, is a tenacious facility in calculating, manipulating, and interfering; through this facility the worldlessness of Judaism receives its ground».[26] The lack of soil, lack of history, and lack of world are just variants of a modern representation of the world.

As such, it is peculiar to find in Heidegger's thoughts that the proprium of Judaism does not include strict identity features, such as Yahweh's call to the people or the prophetic history or messianism. Hence, the Jews enter the metaphysical history of the world, paradoxically, because of their «modernity»: «the occasional increase in the power of Judaism is grounded in the fact that Western metaphysics, especially in its modern evolution, offered the point of attachment for the expansion of an otherwise empty rationality and calculative capacity», and consequently, «[t]he more originary and inceptual the future decisions and questions become, all the more inaccessible will they remain to this "race"».[27]

Yet, what kind of «race» is it? It is not «biology» that determines its definition, but rather the paradoxical historical fact that it is a race in which there is a principle denoting a *negation of the race itself*. In the case of Judaism, the race is no more a synonym of belonging to any definite soil and blood, or to any particular place and time: on the contrary, she fulfils this role through the loss of its peculiar historicity. While assuming the principle of the race in itself, the Jews that deny it or contradict it turn it into homologation.

> «*With their emphatically calculative giftedness*, the Jews have for the longest time been "living" in accord with the principle of race, which is why they are also offering the most vehement resistance to its unrestricted application. The instituting of racial breeding stems not from "life" itself, but from the overpowering of life by machination. What machination pursues with such planning is a complete *deracializing* of peoples through their being clamped into an equally built and equally tailored instituting of all beings. One with the deracializing is | a self-alienation of the peoples – the loss of history, i.e., the loss of the domains of decision regarding being».[28]

Thus, the «race» in which the character of Judaism is meant as a way of conceiving and organizing the history of people and of the world, and whose hidden plot is always, to Heidegger, a history of being. In 1941, it was after outbreak of war between the Reich and the Soviet Union, that the world event was viewed as a case of dealing with the «the historical process which England is now playing out to the end within Americanism and Bolshevism and thus at the same time within world-Judaism» Heidegger notes: «The question of the role of *world-Judaism* is not a racial question, but a metaphysical one, a question that concerns the kind of human

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[26] GA 95, p. 97; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 76.

[27] GA 96, p. 46; Ponderings XII-XV, in *Black Notebooks* 1939–1941, p.37.

[28] GA 96, p. 46; Ponderings XII-XV, in *Black Notebooks* 1939–1941, p. 44., italic by H.

existence which in an *utterly unrestrained* way can undertake as a world-historical "task" the uprooting of all beings from being».[29]

Aside from this «metaphysical» connotation with the problem of Judaism, this particular issue stands as a very «typed» anthropological and political category to Heidegger: its specificity would reside on being the wanderer prototype, calculating and plotting, pursuing the project of the economic dominion of world powers. In this, Heidegger does nothing but recover a version of Judaism and of anti-semitism that was extremely common at that time, and as such, someone could judge that the basis of his interpretation was a real «banality».[30] This was an incredibly «low» conception (even tragic), in which common ancient and visceral prejudices are elevated to a historical-metaphysical dignity.

Nevertheless, Heidegger outlines an extreme step within this perspective: due to its link to the principle of worldwide computability, that is the use and exploiting of the whole being, Judaism is likely to exploit and consume itself. In other words, the Judaic character is bound to self-annihilation due to its enormous dominion (as a metaphysic-nihilistic dominion of machination and technique), re-comprehending *within* itself even what is opposed to it. As can be read in the first Notebook of *Annotations* (1942):

> «Only when what is essentially "Judaic", in a metaphysical sense, fights against all that is Judaic, in history the climax of self-annihilation will be reached; [but this] needs the acknowledgement that what is "Judaic" has completely seized power anywhere, so that even the fight against what is "Judaic", and this fight above all, is implied within its dominion».[31]

Certainly, upon reading this passage, it would be easy to give in the temptation of setting a macabre parallelism with the physical annihilation of the Jews, a tragedy that was already happening at Nazi camps during that year. Even so, the parallel does not explain, nor it allow, a deeper comprehension of Heidegger's thought, and it would just cut out this description of the Judaic feature as being the collector of all metaphysical responsibility (in which Heidegger, following this reading, would then be «anti-Semitic» by definition).[32]

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[29] GA 96, p. 243; Ponderings XII-XV, in *Black Notebooks* 1939–1941, p. 191, italic by H.

[30] «La banalité, dans le cas de Heidegger, est celle de la *doxa* de l'antisémitisme telle qu'elle circulait en Europe dans les années 1920–1940 et telle qu'elle ressurgit de nos jours, singulièrement en France et en Allemagne, en Grèce et un peu partout»: J.-L. Nancy*, Banalité de Heidegger*, p. 11.

[31] GA 97, p. 20. – In the Black Notebooks, Heidegger deals with "annihilation" as a "self-annihilation", also in different contexts, not referring specifically to Judaism: see F. Alfieri, *I «Quaderni neri». Analisi storico-critica sine glossa*, in part. il § 5.2, «"Selbstvernichtung": dalle *Überlegungen* alle *Anmerkungen»»*, pp. 297–319.

[32] In her volume *Heidegger and the Jews. The "Black Notebooks"*, Donatella Di Cesare interprets this passage in the sign of a «metaphysical anti-Semitism», for which the «final solution» of the Jews was to be charged to the Jews themselves as their ontological responsibility, even though they had been the victims (in part. pp. 227–229). Di Cesare reads Heidegger, and in particular the "Black Notebooks", as an opportunity (but as a pretext as well) to «*philosophically* think "what had happened", thus not the Third Reich only, nor Auschwitz, but the "Judaic question" of Western philosophy» (pp. 32–33). Regarding the same researcher, and the same theme, you can also read

Heidegger's criticism of Judaism in a metaphysical perspective and in the context of the history of beyng, is definitively different from Christian theological criticism. In addition, it is also dissimilar to the racist ideology of National Socialism. Heidegger essentially considers World Judaism as an impossibility when facing the question on the truth of Beyng, exactly because it is different from the mere appearance of beings. From this perspective, and with regards to proper philosophical questioning, Heidegger is of the opinion that Judaism is not contrary, but paradoxical to the *fulfillment of National Socialism* and –more relevantly – *of Christianity*. For Heidegger, even Christianity could be viewed to consist of (or can be reduced to) a cultural construction where the question on being is definitely lost.

On the contrary, it could be said that just the affair of the link between *Judaism and Christianity* stands as one of the most relevant (often hidden) signs in the history of metaphysics, as was conceived and patterned by Heidegger. The volumes published in the *Black Notebooks* thus far are peppered throughout with some extremely critical evaluations toward Christianity (presented as the world-view Churches), in which Heidegger sees the unrestrainable coming of a true metaphysical catastrophe. The reason lies in the rationale that, to him, Christianity, as it is performed in modern times, was reduced to a collection of atheism and Jesuitism, and a loss of divine and cultural enterprises. Around 1940, he writes that:

> «Christianity is the most extreme anthropomorphizing of the | human being and is the de-divinizing of its own God. Here cries out only the lamentation of the calculation regarding the salvation of the soul, and everything divine is measured according to this salvific function. But if power now comes to anti-Christianity, an attitude that unconditionally affirms Christianity, merely in reverse, and that exaggerates Christianity to an unsurpassable extent, then the anthropomorphizing of the human being, in unity with the de-divinizing of God, would exhaust all possibilities. The flight of the gods would then be decided [...]. For what would then be attained is that situation in which essential decisions not only appear strange but also are completely forgotten in their possibility and even in their mere idea».[33]

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the pamphlet *Heidegger & Sons. Eredità e futuro di un filosofo*, which offers a new approach to Heidegger's entire thought process from the anti-semitism of the Notebooks. – On the contrary, Peter Trawny, in his *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung* (p. 23 and *passim*) dealt with an «anti-Semitism following the history of being» *(seinsgeschichtlich)*. However, both of them do not seem to be justified, both on a textual level as well as to a theoretical one. Certainly, when Heidegger deals with Judaism (as well as many other themes), he sets it in the context and in the perspective of the history of metaphysics (and of being); but this does not allow one to "essentialize" anti-semitism (which was not theorized by Heidegger as such, and was different from anti-Christianity) as the fundamental and intrinsic feature of his thought. – On this problem, see the balanced *report* by L. Messinese, *La "questione ebraica" nei «Quaderni neri» considerata alla luce della "critica alla metafisica"*. – The dossier on Heidegger's supposed «anti-Semitism» has been understood also in the perspective of the (lack of) ethical responsibility of his thought: cf.the debate offered in: A. Fabris (ed.), *Metafisica e antisemitismo. I* Quaderni neri *di Heidegger tra filosofia e politica*, in part. The contribution by the same Fabris in «Heidegger: l'ambiguità della decisione tra filosofia e politica», pp. 109–128. A recent documentation of this debate is in A.J. Mitchell & P. Trawny (2017) (edd.).

[33] GA 96, p. 138; Ponderings XII-XV, in *Black Notebooks* 1939–1941, pp.107–108.

The denying of Christianity, therefore, is a trend produced from within the same Christianity, as far as it does not face the true, supreme decisions regarding man, being, and God himself, assuming them only as answers that have already been acquired, before which it is not worthy asking, but only worth managing (the computing of salvation). The «overthrowing» of Christianity was previously pointed out by Heidegger on the basis of the eschatological dialectics between Christ and Anti-Christ, in which he states that: «Anti-Christ must descend, as every anti-, from the same essential foundation of what he opposes against – therefore [from the essential foundation] of "Christ". And Christ comes out from the Judaic world [*Judenschaft*] ».[34] In the line going from Anti-Christ, to Christ and Jewishness, Heidegger finds the figure of the tragedy of an epoch marked by the violence and the wreckening of war. Despite this, paradoxically, it is not anti-Judaism, but just Judaism which enlightens the feature metaphysically determining in the drama of the time. It is the Jewishness, in fact, that «in the epoch of Christian West, that is of metaphysics, constitutes the real principle of destruction».[35]

Nevertheless, it is this very moment in which Christianity becomes the place of atheism and escape from God, and when his ecclesiastical-cultural form is more codified and institutionalized, which Heidegger explains through the spiritual-historical category of «Jesuitism». It gathers in Catholicism the modern forms of self-representation of Christianity, carrying out a synthesis of an apologetic organization and an emphasis on spiritual life. In an earlier Notebook on *Ponderings,* it is written:

> «What is "Catholic" acquired its genuine form for the first time in *Jesuitism;* here is the Western model for all unconditional obedience, the elimination of all self-will – the decisiveness of "organization," the sovereignty of propaganda, the justification of oneself through the disparagement of the enemy, and the model for the exploitation of all means of "knowledge" and skill, for falsely changing these to one's own discovery, for the historiological revision of history, for the glorification of volition and of the orderliness of what is soldierly within Catholicism, for the basic comportment of the counter to… (Counter-Reformation). "Catholicism" in this essential sense is in its historical provenance Roman – Spanish –; utterly un-Nordic and completely un-German».[36]

It is also known, from his first courses held in Freiburg in the twenties, that Heidegger traced a neat distinction between the religious experience of the early Christians (Paul's, Augustin's, Luther's Kierkegaard's) and his doctrinal and ecclesiastic systematization. In the *Black Notebooks*, the passage is radicalized in another direction: now, Christianity is considered for its intimate vocation in the possession of a «truth», which is already established and trends to present itself as final answer to those who are opposing to it. Furthermore, all this would be through the proposal of

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[34] GA 97, p. 20. – This relationship between Judaism and Christianity was dealt with by F. Brencio in her essay that was published in F. Brencio (ed.), *La pietà del pensiero. Heidegger e i «Quaderni neri»*, pp. 107–186. See also R.M. Marafioti, *Gli «Schwarze Hefte» di Heidegger. Un «passaggio» del pensiero dell'essere*, in part. pp. 114–122,

[35] GA 97, p. 20.

[36] GA 95, p. 326; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 254.

a so-called search, which would in reality – following Heidegger –not be a true search, because it would be a hybrid; a seeking with no questioning, and so with no true thinking.

Strangely, but by no means accidental, he leans on an anti-Jesuit author like Blaise Pascal (who is a point of reference both for the Catholics and for the Protestants) in order to illustrate the importance of Jesuitism: this could have been the ingenious champion of Christianity as research and spirituality developed as a strategy of cultural organization. Indeed, such a historical perspective paradoxically joins Christianity and anti-Christian currents: «The rescue of cultural Christianity and the semblance of anti-Christian world-views – belong together», because both of them, and their «dovetailing», is the sign of «the modern anthropormorphizing of the human being» (a phenomenon which Heidegger certainly does not consider a positive one), and one which «makes possible the "triumphant parade of technology"».[37]

Here, the overturning of the traditional hermeneutic principle begins, starting from Hegel, and following through a modernity that would embed its roots in the German protestant spirit. Heidegger, on the contrary, considers what is spiritually and originally German (which does *not* match with the protestant decision about the subject and the individual freedom), and that was dimmed by what is «modern». The spirit has turned into culture; the meditation on the truth of being has turned into faith that holds a true doctrine on the world; the nihilist anxiety facing God's death did not bear the load of nothing (namely the enigma of being), but established in the belief and in the promotion of a «Christian worldview» and even a «Christian cultural God», whose existence he does not know and never will.[38]

Here, a necessary parallel reading of the Black Notebooks and *Contributions to Philosophy* is needed, especially as for the theme of the «Last God». Heidegger does not limit himself to deconstruct the image of the God in the Judaic-Christian tradition (from the fullness of being, that is from the '*ego sum qui sum*' or from the '*ipsum esse subsistens*', to the lack of being). As such, he wants to rethink it being itself, as now he is now dealing with what gods or the Last God «need», what they essentially «miss», and which can actually never «be», consequently imposing itself in escape and refusal.

In the meantime, it can be noticed in the Notebooks that when Heidegger deals with the abyss opening in the history of metaphysics that pertain to the lack of gods and of the sense of the same lack – that is with the falling of the *question* about God –, he recovers and re-elaborates his way by tracing the Judaic-Christian tradition (as God's calling, the promise, the prophets, God's escaping face to idols, his coming to the

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[37] GA 95, p. 345; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 269. For a more positive reading of the relationship between Heidegger and Pascal, which could be seen as a kind of "erased trace", see A. Raffelt, *Heidegger und Pascal – eine verwischte Spur*.

[38] Cfr. GA 95, p. 8; Ponderings VII-XI, in *Black Notebooks* 1938–1939, p. 7. – On this reading direction, see O Pöggeler, *Heideggers Weg von Luther zu Hölderlin*, in part. pp. 178–186.

people, his epiphany in history …).[39] Nevertheless, these traces are combined, on Hölderlin's flow, with the pagan image of a divinity bringing some messages in form of signs, making allusions, and the pointing out of natural revelations or mythic and historical events. These would always be transforming, and then always be hidden, never getting caught by anyone.

However, would Christianity only be comprised as such for Heidegger? In the Notebooks, there are some passages in which Heidegger seems to leave the question open (even if it is soon closed). An instance of this is in 1938, just after having firmly asserted that "The forms of *modern Christianity* [are] the genuine configurations of Godlessness",[40] where he notices:

> «*And yet*: Christianity has created and aroused powers of the spirit, of discipline, and of strength of soul, powers which are not to be thought of as missing from Western history, especially since, even if only in reverse, they continue to be effective and still offer "support" to individuals. / But: the great decisions do not occur there. Christianity has long ago lost all power of origination; it has made its own history historiological».[41]

How is this open possibility that Heidegger leaves in the folds of his discourse to be understood? Is it a simple acknowledgement that, *despite everything*, Christianity has been a possibility or an attempt at comprehending being and truth, which is still prevalent despite the nihilism of the present time? Or rather that it is a more radical charge, one that is a possession and a process which proved to be «nothing», and in which the big history was reduced to a historiographic interpretation? Or, that it could have developed in a different way from what had been?[42]

Here, a problem occurs with Heidegger's so-called anti-Christian position, for he has been learning to see literally in early Christianity some ontological-existential phenomena ever since, and has seen been nurturing the problem of metaphysics in the theoretical field of Catholic theology (although endorsed at a «doctrinal» level at best), and this leads to the sharing of the notion of Nietzsche's «God is dead». This is something a Christian only could do, because he only is able to understand the abyss and the challenges of such a death, without reducing it to a mere loss of «values», but assuming it as an «accomplishment».

However, it is still remarkable that Heidegger cares about distinguishing between «Christendom» (*Christentum*), assumed to be a world view and a cultural

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[39] On the trace inherited and also removed in Heidegger's discourse on Judaic tradition, see M. Zarader, *Il debito impensato. Heidegger e l'eredità ebraica*.

[40] GA 94, p. 522; Ponderings II-VI, in *Black Notebooks* 1931–1938, p. 380.

[41] GA 94, pp. 522–523, italic by H. – J.-L. Nancy (*Banalità di Heidegger*, «Supplemento», pp. 67–69) based on this passage, it could be hypothesized that perhaps Heidegger thought that Christianity could have resisted to Western decline, and not only "accomplish" it.

[42] On this, it would be worthy to reconsider a question posed by Derrida: Heidegger's anti-Christianity is unrecoverable, or could it be assumed as the essential truth (namely no longer «metaphysical») of Christianity itself, but as its «super-original spirit»? But if so, it would be then a «pre-super-original», that would result anything else but what it allows as possible, and so something essentially different from Christianity itself. See J. Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* University of Chicago Press (1989), pp. 124 ss.

enterprise, and «Christianity» (*Christlichkeit*) as the experience of New Testament faith. The former would be nothing but «metaphysics selling Christian faith as knowledge»; the latter is centered on «Christian faith [happening in] Christ». Then he adds, probably in reference to himself, that «who thinks against Christendom does not think against Christianity»: and this not only because, in general, when one thinks *against* it should do it against itself, but also, and more radically, because «thought as a thought is a gap [*Kluft*] with regard to faith», and then it is needless to think against faith. In fact, «only those theologians assuming Christendom as Christianity do confuse everything».[43]

With an accent typical of Paul's, but with a tone that one may call Lutheran, Heidegger asserts his hermeneutic principle with regard to the link faith-knowledge and Christianity-Christendom: «Thought is foolishness to faith, and faith is impossible to thought. Even if both of them are joined in their mutual acknowledgement. Their mutual acknowledgement stands in the fact that faith demands thought to be thought, and thought demands faith to be faith».[44] Paul considers the faith in Christ being crucified as «a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the heathens» (I Letter to the Corinthians); here, the thought itself is a scandal to faith, because, on Heidegger's point of view, an accepting of the Grace would actually give away any knowledge and therefore any questions on what is the essential truth of thinking. It is not matter of an agreement between faith and knowledge: between them a «conflict» is effective, owing to the fact that each one of them demands the other to be what it is – and stop.

Nevertheless, at the root of this disagreement lies Heidegger's fundamental option. In the Notebook from 1946, he writes:

> «One should think, one day, for once, a thought about my anti-Christianity. This, certainly not to acknowledge my thought to be still "Christian". I am not, owing to the very simple reason that I cannot. And I cannot because, to tell it in a Christian sense, I have not the grace. I will never have it, as far as my way remains indebted to thought. [...] Anyway no Christian thought is given, remaining [in the meantime] thought».[45]

A theme of great interest needs to be outlined here to better understand Heidegger's thought; the relationship between thought itself and Grace. Heidegger did not simply prefer thought (and philosophy) to Grace, or against it, but he sought to

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[43] GA 97, p. 205. – Heidegger's writing on Nietzsche's «God's death» (dating to the academic courses held between 1936 and 1940) points out: «For Nietzsche, Christianity is the historical, secular-political phenomenon of the Church and its claim to power within the formation of Western humanity and its modem culture. Christianity in this sense and the Christian life of the New Testament faith are not the same. Even a non-Christian life can affirm Christianity and make use of it for the sake of power; conversely, a Christian life is not necessarily in need of Christianity. Therefore, a confrontation with Christianity is by no means an absolute battle against what is Christian»: *Nietzsches Wort «Gott ist tot»*, in: GA 5, pp. 219–220; eng. transl., *Nietzsche's Word: "God is dead"*, in: *Off the Beaten Track*, p. 164.

[44] GA 97, p. 206.

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 199. – A rapid notice to the relationship on incompatibility between grace and thought, moving from this passage, can be found in J.-L. Nancy, *Banalita di Heidegger*, «Supplemento», p. 76.

somehow r*ethink Grace itself as thinking.*[46] As paradoxical as it may seem, Heidegger's clear separation from the grounds of Judaism and (in a more evident way) from Christianity, is in his decision to be able to rethink of Grace – one that he asserts he does not possess and *never be able* to possess – as a gift with no giver, as a calling with no caller, as a promise with no inheritance, and one which will never fulfill but will constantly escape from us.

However, Heidegger indubitably acknowledges Judaism and Christianity as conjoined in the same destiny, which is nihilism accomplished by modernity. In the end, it seems like a «self-annihilation now threatening being-there [Da-Sein] in the betrayal of thought». This is something worse than the «destruction and devastation now oppressing the German and their nation, as terrible as it may be to bear».[47]

Indeed, there are some passages of Black Notebooks dating just after the end of the War, where Heidegger even asserts – in an absolutely tragic tone – that nihilism has become «definitive» because it succeeded in «taking "faith" to his service, as well as "Christianity" and morals», adding that in such a situation «the terror of definitive nihilism is much more frightening than all the violence used by the executioner's assistants and of *Kz* [internment camps] ».[48] He increases this opinion by an assertion that maybe «the disclaiming of this destiny» by the German people and its «submission to the world will», if it was «thought on the basis of destiny» itself, «would be a "guilt", and a "common guilt", even more essential, whose entity would be immeasurable – and immeasurable in its essence even with regard to the horrific "gaz chambers"». He further notes that it is precisely this common guilt that would be «more dreadful than any [other] "crime" that might be publicly "labelled"». Basically, it is this common guilt of disclaiming destiny or the betrayal of knowledge (by the German people themselves) which makes the «German people and country a whole *Kz* [internment camp] ».[49]

Once more, Judaism, which is assumed as the principle of *ruining* metaphysics, i.e. the Christian West, stands or falls with Christianity, and is assumed as the principle of *carrying out* the technical dominion of the world. Both of them are filled by the logic of universal computability (and more specifically «Catholic»). In the history of being, they stand on the same side with regard to Greek-ness. Somehow, the German also somehow have the task to remind, protect and relaunch – with a «new beginning» of thought – the «original thought» of Greek-ness, which was diverted and hidden by the Judaic-Christian development of metaphysics. In fact, «anti-Semitism», as Heidegger clearly notes, «is as absurd and reprehensible as Christian bloody actions, and further their bloodless acting, against "the heathens". Moreover,

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[46] See C. Esposito, *L'essere, la storia e la grazia in Heidegger*, particularly. pp. 204–207.

[47] GA 97, p. 83.

[48] *Ibidem*, p. 59. – On the dramatic drafting of these passages of Black Notebooks after war, see Di Cesare *Heidegger e gli ebrei*, pp. 233–238.

[49] GA 97, pp. 99–100.

the fact that Christianity labels anti-Semitism as "not Christian" descends from the high training education to shrewdness which is typical of its power technique».[50]

It is possible that all these observations of historical-reconstructive nature about a decisive moment of Heidegger's course (the thirties/forties) may contribute when calling into question some interpreting perspectives which have been assumed as a given for far too long, especially when elaborating Heidegger's place in the thought and the culture of our time. Since the seventies of the twentieth century, Heidegger's thought has mostly been considered to be extraordinary place for the critical-deconstructive transition of metaphysical tradition – from essentially Christian-modern to Heidegger – as it was possible to abandon ontological essentialism and the primacy of the conception of beings as a «presence», toward forms in which the sense of being counts as a linguistic reconstruction in the irrecoverable difference between the event of being and the representation of beings, and in the identification of the truth of being as the radical impossibility when pertaining to any «objectivity» in the datum.

It seems to me that the dossier that comprises the *Black Notebooks* definitively closes the affair of Heidegger's post-metaphysical and post-Christian image (commonly «post-modern»), and replaces the core of the unsolved tangle of his thought: the broken confrontation to modernity and his clinch with the *Cristlichkeit*. Perhaps, it could be said that was appears solved for him was the possible future of his presence in modern philosophy.

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[50] GA 97, p. 159.

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Part IV
Science

Between Physics and Theology: Heidegger, Philosopher of Science

Stefano Bancalari

Abstract This paper maintains that Heidegger's thought offers a good theoretical basis for a productive comparison between science and philosophy. After examining the 'consubstantiality' between philosophy and science, which emerges in the (only recently published) first part of the conference "Phenomenology and Theology", the hypothesis will be tested that philosophy is the «ontological corrective» of physics. The idea of (physical) time as an illusion, developed by the theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli, appears to be perfectly (and maybe only) understandable in the Heideggerian framework.

Keywords Phenomenology · Physics · Ontological corrective · Time · Blurring

The relevance of Heidegger for that which, in spite of Heidegger himself, we continue to call philosophy cannot be found in the folds of his 'jargon' or in the front page controversies that he was cyclically featured in. This (obviously debatable) view is the foundation for the thesis that I would like to advance with all the approximation that is inevitable in the introductory: taken from the appropriate angle and critically accepted, Heidegger's thought offers a good theoretical basis for a productive comparison between science and philosophy.

I do, however, realize that this thesis may sound difficult to support and perhaps even be viewed as provocative. It is customary to summarize Heidegger's thinking on science to the celebrated affirmation – «science does not think»,[1] and it is duly difficult to imagine a scientist that would be willing to tolerate such a sentiment. Indeed, one can certainly adopt the less polemical interpretation, in which these words have no devaluing intent, but merely revive the Kantian distinction between «thinking» (*Denken*) and «knowing» (*Erkennen*). This would then assign the noble field of knowledge to science, a field which is merely viewed to be different from

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[1] M. Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?* (1952), GA 7, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2000, p. 133; *Was heißt Denken* (1951/2), GA 8, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2002, p. 9.

S. Bancalari (✉)
Filosofia, Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
e-mail: stefano.bancalari@uniroma1.it

philosophy. Yet, we must admit that opening a dialogue with someone by explaining that he or she, technically speaking, «does not think» may not be the most effective strategy: The scientist cannot be blamed for drawing the conclusion that, regardless of how one may put it, the statement places science in a subordinate rank and value in respect to philosophy, as it is actively being declared as being incapable of elaborating for itself a distinction it is forced to receive externally.

However, for the moment, let us leave our hypothetical interlocutor and look toward a real one: consider Carlo Rovelli's recently published *The Order of Time*, a popular and brilliant text in which the theoretical physicist rigorously but accessibly illustrates the possible meanings of the concept of 'time'as contextualized by the most advanced research in theoretical physics. The book lends itself well in being taken as a paradigmatic case because Rovelli shows great care and diligence in respect to the contribution that philosophy can offer to the development of the notions that are used in physics. It is clear that, in such a context, the reference to Heidegger is almost out of obligation: it is significant, however, that the author absolves himself by limiting his analysis to that which is strictly essential. Rovelli writes: «In the wake of Husserl, Martin Heidegger writes – as far as my love of the clarity and transparency of Galileo's writing allows me to decipher the deliberate obscurity of Heidegger's language – that "time temporalizes itself only to the extent that it is human" […] Since he is interested in what being is for man (for "the entity that poses the problem of existence"), Heidegger ends up by identifying the internal consciousness of time as the horizon of being itself».[2] Without yielding to summary and prejudicially negative judgments, and even in the genuine effort to verify the possibility of an encounter between languages and perspectives, the scientist actually performs a similar operation to that of the philosopher, giving him 'tit for tat' and sketching the outline of an interlocutor substantially incapable of saying anything really significant: not only does Heidegger use deliberately obscure language, in what seems to be an effort to evade the clear communication between peers that is fundamental for the progress of science; what is worse is that his concept of time is the result of an undue substitution of human temporality with that of *Being* in general, which leads to 'subjectivization' and, therefore, to the removal of the only terrain on which physics can sensibly proceed: objectivity. Thus, it is as we wanted to demonstrate: Heidegger seems to be the least suited thinker with whom an attempt at a comparison between philosophy and science should be performed in present day.

Referring back to the thesis stated in the opening, I do not mean to deny or minimize the difficulties involved in the task at hand, but seek to derive from the Heideggerian position (which is much more complex than the sketches that have thus far emerged) some elements and good arguments that open a channel of communication. To this end, I will focus on the analysis of what seems to me as a decisive place (though not the only one) toward understanding Heidegger's theorization of the relationship between philosophy and science. I refer to the famous conference on *Phenomenology and Theology*,

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[2] C. Rovelli, *L'ordine del tempo*, Milano 2017, p. 158; eng. tr., *The Order of Time*, Riverheads Books, New York 2018, p. 186 [henceforth: OT].

which was held on July 8th, 1927 in Tübingen and reconvened on February 14th, 1928 in Marburg. In this conference, as it is known, Heidegger attempted to clarify the theoretical relationship between philosophy and theology, considering the latter as a «science», and, in particular, as a «positive science»[3] in so much as it is based on faith as its factual datum (*positum*). While it is a well-known and highly discussed text, today it is possible to consider it from a new perspective.

The conference was originally divided into two parts, but Heidegger only published the second: *The Positivity of Theology and Its Relationship to Philosophy*. With the recent publication of Gesamtausgabe Volume 80.1, the first part has finally been made available, and is titled: *The Non-Philosophical Sciences as Positive Sciences and Philosophy as Transcendental Science.*[4] This part was read only at the first conference in Tübingen, and was not repeated in Marburg,[5] nor included in the published version. The reason for this omission is not immediately obvious, especially as Heidegger states: «the considerations of the first part are the decisive ones, even if the questions of the second part will have a more immediate interest».[6] One could form imaginative hypotheses in this regard: maybe with the first public pronouncement Heidegger realized that the text was excessively lengthy and risked penalizing the analysis of the actual theme?[7] However, regardless of the motivation, it is more interesting to seriously take the assertion that the «decisive» considerations are developed in the first part and ask how and whether the integral reading of the conference would bring new elements to our question. As I will look toward demonstrating, this is precisely what happens, particularly in reference to three decisive points: (1) in the recently published part, in which it is markedly more so than anywhere else, Heidegger so vehemently insists on an «original connection» (*ursprünglicher Zusammenhang*)[8] between philosophy and the positive sciences that a real 'consubstantiality' emerges between these two types of theoretical

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[3] M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (1927), GA 9, pp. 47–67; engl. tr. by W. McNeill, J. G. Hart and J. C. Maraldo, *Phenomenology and Theology*, in *Pathmarks*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1998, pp. 40–54 [henceforth: PhTh II].

[4] M. Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie. I. Teil. Die nichtphilosophischen als positiven Wissenschaften und die Philosophie als transzendentale Wissenschaft*, GA 80.1, ed. by G. Neumann, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2016, pp. 179–206 [henceforth: PhTh I].

[5] See the editor's notes, GA 80.1, pp. 538–539.

[6] *PhTh I*, p. 184.

[7] A hypothesis that would be supported if the indication on the manuscript of the second part of the conference (kept in the Frankfurter Marcuse-Archive), which shows the date of July 9th (instead of the 8th), 1927, was not a material error, but attested to the fact that actually the two parts were read on different days. See GA 80.1, p. 540. Less convincing, in light of the reading of the text, is Kockelmans', according to which «Heidegger eliminated the first part of the lecture because it consisted of a brief summary of his conception of hermenutic phenomenology with which he felt everyone be sufficiently familiar in that it had been dealt with in section 7 of *Being and Time*»; J. Kockelmans, *Heidegger on Theology*, «The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy», 4, 1973, pp. 85–108, here p. 85.

[8] *PhTh I*, p. 204.

questioning[9]; (2) the joint reading of the two parts of the conference suggests a parallel between theology and physics, which invites us to attempt an interpretation of the relationship between the latter and philosophy in terms of «ontological corrective»; (3) on the basis of what emerges from the analysis of the previous points, it is possible to move a step further and show the unexpected convergence between the Heideggerian perspective and the 'physical' conception of time proposed by Rovelli, which attests to the opportunity, and perhaps the need, to combine the languages.

1   *The 'Consubstantiality' Between Philosophy and the Positive Sciences*

The term which I use toward radicalizing the Heideggerian idea of an «original connection» between philosophy and the positive sciences – 'consubstantiality' – is particularly challenging given the general thesis of Heidegger; according to which, the abyss of an absolute difference yawns between the former and the latter. According to the famous statement in *Phenomenology and Theology II*: «Theology is a positive science and as such absolutely different from philosophy».[10] The absoluteness of this difference rests on the radical heterogeneity between Being, which philosophy is concerned with, and entity, the object of the positive sciences; a heterogeneity that, in regard to the respective methods of theoretical investigation, is expressed in two fundamental aspects: Firstly, there is a substantial continuity between the sciences and the pre-scientific attitude, while philosophy requires a «fundamental shift (*Umstellung*) of view»[11]; Secondly, the sciences operate within in a limited region of the entity, while philosophy transcends any possible regional delimitation as it does not properly deal with 'anything', that is, of any *positum.*

This Heideggerian thesis is one of the central nodes of the entire conference and, as such, is never brought into question: nevertheless, in the first part it resonates with a different emphasis, which makes space for a deeper understanding of its meaning. Here, in fact, Heidegger begins with a broad analysis of the idea of science «in general» (*überhaupt*), which is therefore placed in a theoretical domain preceding the absolute difference between ontological and ontical science: all that is affirmed therefore applies to both *contemporaneously*.

Science is presented as a specific way of existence, which, like any other, presupposes and is grafted onto a pre-scientific openness (toward entity) and pre-ontological openness (toward Being). According to his customary argumentative

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[9] This idea confirms and reinforces that «cooperation» between philosophy and the sciences opportunely detected by F. Dastur, *Le concept de science chez Heidegger avant le "tournant" des années trente*, «Noesis», 9, 2005, pp. 7–28, who maintains that the «caricature» of Heidegger, as an enemy of science, «needs to be widely revised, especially as regards the 'first' Heidegger for whom philosophy itself defined itself as a very special science» (p. 7).

[10] *PhTh II*, p. 49/p. 41.

[11] *PhTh II*, p. 48/p. 41; *PhTh I*, p. 196.

scheme, Heidegger denounces the distinction between theory and practice that is traditionally used to grasp the specificity of this form of existence, claiming that it is wholly inadequate; but here, more than elsewhere, he emphasizes with particular insistence its 'technical' and 'manipulative' aspect: «The absence of praxis, in particular of the technical dealing with things, is so little characteristic [of science] that indeed science requires technical manipulations (*Hantierungen*), as evidenced by the construction of any experimental device, publishing techniques, archaeological excavations and the like. Scientific behavior must put technique at its service and can, in regards to its results, be placed at the service of technique, such as knowledge».[12] As such, that which characterizes science – science *in general* – has nothing to do with contemplation as a distinct from action, but has to be traced elsewhere, and precisely in the gesture with which Dasein accepts freely submitting to a constraint: «Scientific knowledge is a free task […]. The free grasping of the possibility of such disclosure [disclosure] is a free binding oneself *to what is to be disclosed*, that is to thinghood (*Sachhaltigkei*t) and to the ways of Being of the thing itself».[13] In consecrating to the *Sache,* which must be disclosed with the exclusive task of disclosing itself, the Dasein implements a transition from pre-scientific (also addressed to the thing and to things, but not in view of their disclosing) to scientific behavior, which consists of a specific operation. It is a very delicate point, to which Heidegger reserves particular attention: «Of what consists the essential moment on the grounds of which scientific behavior as such is constituted in the overturning (*Umschlag*) originating from pre-scientific behavior? We call it objectivization (*Vergegenständlichung*) […]. With the existential existence of Dasein there is essentially a double possibility of objectivization: the objectivization of the entity (nature, history, etc.) and the objectivization of Being as such. The two fundamental directions of a possible objectivization – which is aimed on the one hand at entity and the other at Being – are evidently referred to each other in an essential way, as each (*jedes*) entity is and all (*alles*) the Being is given each time as Being of an entity».[14]

This passage clearly reveals what I have termed as 'consubstantiality'. First of all it is good to draw attention to a significant terminological clue. In defining the transition from the form of pre-scientific existence to science, Heidegger speaks of *Umschlag*: in this choice, it is evident the intention to distinguish this 'reversal', which inaugurates science in general (transversal in respect to its multiple declinations), from the specific *Umstellung* that characterizes the overturning of philosophy, the only science of Being. However, this only renders more lucidly that the fact that on this level, i.e. beyond the difference that creates an absolute separation between them, ontological science and ontical sciences are united by the same 'taking of leave' which is implemented in the form of a reversal: both distance themselves from pre-scientific existence, which has to do with Being and/or entity before any thematization.

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[12] *PhTh I*, pp. 189–190.

[13] *PhTh I*, p. 190.

[14] *PhTh I*, pp. 191–192.

But there is more. Heidegger emphasizes that in both cases it is the same operation that allows such an overturning: «objectivization», or the transformation of the entity/Being into an «object». Science arises in the moment in which we are in contact with a *Gegen-stand*, i.e., etymologically speaking, a 'thing' that is in front of us and at sufficient distance in order to appear explicitly and thematically as that one specific 'thing'. It is decisive to note that the notion of 'object' is formal[15] enough to be placed simultaneously on both sides of the abyss opened by the absolute difference. Strange as it may sound from a Heideggerian point of view, even Being, just like entity, can become an 'object' when it becomes an explicit theme of a scientific consideration[16]: the two types of objectivization, even in their absolute diversity, are deeply intertwined by the fact that, as Heidegger writes, on the one hand the entity is, and on the other, Being is always the Being of an entity.

At this level, the sense of such an intertwinement remains rather vague. However, it becomes clear when, having clarified the sense of science *überhaupt*, Heidegger dedicates himself to the determination of the concept of positive science which was gained from an analysis of the internal structure of physics. Among the many positive sciences, the latter is invested with a paradigmatic function. As such, it is thanks to the preliminary analysis of physics that it becomes possible, in the best-known part of the conference, to determine the positivity of theology.

The Heideggerian argumentation has a well-known structure, which will be (partially) resumed in the major work as well as in subsequent texts. The first step is to deconstruct the traditional understanding of physics. Nothing of what is generally considered to be its 'original' element, in the logical and chronological sense of the term, is actually so: neither the observation of facts, nor the application of the experimental method (as opposed to a merely deductive process), nor the use of mathematics can be counted as being at the origin of physics, and is instead essentially based on what Heidegger calls the «mathematical project of nature».[17] The physical phenomenon, properly stated, appears only in the framework of a nature conceived, that is projected, as the totality of pure processes of motion that can be determined by laws. Only by virtue of this specific form of objectivization does this entity show itself, and shows itself as investigable through the use of the mathematical and technical instruments of physics; it is in precisely this sense that the physical entity, in as much as it refers to an opening that precedes it and renders it possible – and that, however, is methodologically placed in parentheses – can be taken as a *positum*: the exact opposite of a positivistic conception. The great methodological innovation

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[15] In order to grasp the meaning of Heidegger's notion of 'object' in its formality, the considerations elaborated on the basis of the Husserlian distinction between generalization and formalization are decisive. *Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*, GA 60, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1975, pp. 57–62.

[16] See also M. Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1995, p. 458.

[17] *PhTh I*, p. 195.

that Galileo and Kepler have given to science, therefore, is not in their method of sticking to the facts, but in their discovery that «pure fact is not to be found».[18]

It would be extremely reductive to translate (and thus trivialize) this statement into a postmodern slogan, as if Heidegger were taking leave of the cognitive value of science by reducing it to one of the many possible (and substantially equivalent) interpretations of the world: if you want to understand something about how the world works in terms of the motion and the laws that determines it, physics is the only science entitled to make a statement. Yet, even a physicist cannot seriously advance the claim to stick to pure facts, as she or he knows very well: what Heidegger calls 'project', in fact, does nothing but respond to the same instance that is expressed by the concept of 'model' used in physics, and this consists of taking 'critical' distance – in the Kantian and Heideggerian sense of the term[19] – toward the ingenuousness of pure fact.

If this is all true, the definition of physics as a pure and simple 'ontical' science has to be reconsidered. Its 'positive' character does not consist of its radical extraneousness to the ontological dimension (in fact, ontical science projects the constitution of the Being of its object), but only in the fact that this ontological project is not thematized as such. This means that in the very moment in which the ontological dimension – on which physics implicitly insists – becomes explicit, physics becomes *eo ipso* ontology: not, evidently, fundamental ontology, because this investigates the Being of the privileged entity, but ontology in any case, that is, «ontology taken in the widest sense»,[20] as read in §3 of *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger deals with the ontological primacy of *Seinsfrage* in respect to any other scientific question. This intermediate space between the fundamental ontology and the ontical dimension of the positive sciences, which recalls what Husserl terms as a «regional ontology», emerges sporadically in the Heideggerian texts of this period, without ever gaining a stable status and or a clear placement in the conceptual framework as a whole. However, the very fact that this space can open itself reaffirms and strengthens our thesis of 'consubstantiality' and indicates a worthy course of investigation.

In essence, Heidegger states that science, as an ontological project, constantly makes use of what it cannot thematize. This idea lends itself to two possible readings: we have began with the first and more trivial one, which led us directly to the affirmation that science produces knowledge but does not think. The second and much more interesting reading consists in the idea that science, in order to be what it is, and in order to manage the entity, i.e. the *positum* in which it must intervene with its own instruments, is already *more than science* in itself. By virtue of the fact of being what it is science is already beyond itself: thus, it is already an ontology. Once again, the first part of the conference offers valuable support for this type of reading: «All the ontical, positive sciences of entity are in a certain way, that is, not

[18] *PhTh I*, p. 196.

[19] Starting from *Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (GA 22), Heidegger defines philosophy as «criticism» because it distinguishes being from entity (pp. 7–8).

[20] M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1993, p. 11; *Being and Time*, eng. tr. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Blackwell, Oxford 2001, p. 31.

thematically and preliminarily, ontological as well. On the other hand (*Umgekehrt*) ontology is necessarily always already ontological, though in an un-thematic and non-essential way (*beiläufig*) […]. Each positive science hides within itself a more or less already-formed ontology. Philosophy, therefore, is not outside the positive sciences, but is *latent* in them; yet not intelligible and achievable in themselves, because it requires a method that is, given their ontical character, esoteric».[21] While reiterating the difference that makes the philosophical method «esoteric» with regards to the other sciences, Heidegger lucidly states that even the ontological sciences are «in a certain way» ontological, because they harbor, in a «latent» way, philosophy. Indeed, this involves philosophy to such an extent that, without altering its fundamental character, it makes it somewhat 'ontical', with a movement which is reciprocal and symmetrical in respect to that one that makes the ontical sciences 'ontological'.

On the one hand, the revolution of modern physics – the mathematical project of nature – has an indubitable ontological reach that the latently philosophical side of physics brings to light; on the other hand, once ontology becomes involved in the solicitation stemming from a positive science, and begins to question the way in which the latter projects its own *positum* – exactly what Heidegger does in the text we are examining – it does not remain identical to itself. Philosophy/ontology/phenomenology is not an immutable *passepartout,* which can, with the same 'technique', open up any specific field of the entity studied by this or that science. Philosophy will rather transform itself in the course of its operation: «Phenomenology must not nor does it want to form a technique (*Technik*) of philosophizing. Every genuine method is transformed with that which from time to time is the originality of penetrating into the object and with the breadth of its unveiling».[22] A philosophy that allows itself to be involved in the comparison with physics – or with theology – is not identical to one that does not. If this is true, it means that the idea of a plurality of 'regional ontologies' that coexist peacefully in the ontological framework which is defined in its general foundations by a unique, fundamental ontology is, in principle, destined to failure: each particular ontology, elaborated from a specific positive science, inevitably feeds back into ontology as such, forcing a continuous revision of itself in a way in which it is completely in line with the 'crisis of the foundations' that opens the ontological sciences to their 'ontological' need: the need which Heidegger highlights in *Being and Time*.[23]

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[21] *PhTh I*, p. 184.

[22] *PhTh I*, p. 181.

[23] Cfr. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 9/p. 29: «The real 'movement' of sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself. The level which a science has reached is determined by how far it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts».

2 Philosophy as an «Ontological Corrective» of Physics

The analysis of 'consubstantiality' allows us to exclude the idea that between onto-logical science and the ontical sciences, and consequently between philosophy and physics, there is an univocal foundational relationship, in which, according to the classical metaphysical scheme, philosophy is the foundation from which every other form of knowledge springs. On the contrary, to refer to an effective expression used by Heidegger in a near-contemporary conference on the *Concept and development of phenomenology* which was held in Marburg in 1926, this relationship is a «mutual fertilization» (*gegenseitige Befruchtung*).[24]

Indeed, in *Phenomenology and Theology I,* this relationship of bidirectional yet asymmetric interaction is affirmed but not concretely elaborated. Rather, it is in the second part, when he dedicates himself to the analysis of the positivity of theology, that Heidegger offers a precise determination of how it should be understood. Here, the idea of «correction» (*Korrektion*) is introduced, which is fully expressed in the formula: «*Philosophy is the formally indicative ontological corrective of the ontical and in particular of the pre-Christian content of basic theological concepts*».[25]

This is not the place to proceed to a detailed interpretation of this dense and much renowned formulation. Instead, the main point would be in underscoring what appears to be a decisive fundamental idea behind it: an idea that can be effectively expressed using the metaphor (more Husserlian than Heideggerian) of 'parallel-ism'. Philosophy does not 'ground' science, explaining independently and *a priori* the conceptual tools that science then uses; nor does it ground science in the sense of testing scientific findings in the light of some more powerful procedures and methods unrelated to science itself, and eventually 'correcting' what science claims to discover. Rather it seeks to do the opposite. The *Korrektion*, which Heidegger intends in etymological sense as «co-direction» (*Mitleitung*), suggests an accompani-ment of science on the part of philosophy, supporting science in its autonomous proceeding: not by claiming a right to have a say in what science does, but by offer-ing science the opportunity to view itself from an external gaze and thus by allowing it to critically return to itself with a vision of whether it has been faithful to its own requests. Specifically, in the case of the relationship between philosophy and theol-ogy, philosophy consists of placing theological and fundamental-ontological con-cepts side-by-side: in Heidegger's example, the concept of «sin» and the related ontological-fundamental concept of «guilt». This does not occur in order to add new content to the former, but vice versa, i.e., to prevent the theological concept from being disfigured by an inadequate conceptuality of the entity, Dasein, that is prop-erly in question here. That would happen if, for example, one understood the con-cept of «sin» in the naturalistic sense as the property of an entity that contaminates the latter perhaps through biological transmission, rather than something existential that the Dasein is asked to take on. In other words: philosophy permits a theological

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[24] M. Heidegger, *Begriff und Entwicklung der Phänomenologie*, GA 80.1, p. 171.

[25] *PhTh II*, p. 65/ p. 52.

understanding of sin as a «formal indication,» rather than as a hereditary one, freeing theology from an inadequate ontology in order to maintain fidelity to itself.[26]

If this is defined to be the relationship between philosophy and theology, and if theology's positive character has been determined thanks to the analysis of physics as a paradigmatic science, it would be legitimate to ask whether the relationship between philosophy and physics can also be specified in these same terms. This would mean the question of whether we can understand philosophy as an 'ontological corrective that formally indicates the ontical content of the fundamental concepts of physics'. Such a hypothesis seems risky. A fundamental obstacle appears to reside in the fact that theology deals with faith, a specific existential possibility of the Dasein, whereas the entity dealt with by physics has a character of Being which is «not of the character of Dasein». However, this does not withstand closer inspection. In fact, the relationship of «correction» precisely consists of seeking a latent dimension in science which makes science more than itself, and which moves science in the direction of that fundamental ontology from which it comes (whether aware of it or not). More simply, the 'correction' is nothing other than the invitation to gather the outcome of a project within the object studied by a positive science, i.e. the necessity that the Dasein appropriates it as something that concerns it and calls on it simply because it is Dasein.

This hypothesis would remain abstract and arbitrary, if Heidegger himself had not proceeded exactly on this basis in a working manuscript relating to a conference dedicated to *The Threat of Science* which was held a decade after the one we have been referring to. As he immediately explains, the title should not be understood in the sense that science would be dangerous to man: it is in relation to itself that science – Heidegger specifies that he is talking about «modern science» – represents a danger, and that this danger is the progressive disengagement from its domain of things (*Sachgebiet*) and «*above all* the destruction of the relationship to the domain of Being from which the domain of things has been derived».[27] As can be seen, even in this case the question is the fidelity of science to its own vocation, which consists in a free binding to the truth and which risks failure in the progressive technicization of science, which would distance the latter from itself. Even physics, like theology (in another sense), must recover its relationship to the Dasein: «The *truth* of knowledge, and here of *science*, is founded in Da-sein».[28]

The way Heidegger demonstrates how this recovery can take place is very interesting. First, he highlights a distinction between modern and contemporary physics, a distinction that, on other occasions, he has declared to be substantially irrelevant.[29]

[26] For a more detailed interpretation of the consituative metholological role of formal indication see S. Bancalari, *Logica dell'epochè. Per un'introduzione alla fenomenologia della religione*, ETS, Pisa 2015.

[27] M. Heidegger, *Die Bedrohung der Wissenschaft*, 1937, GA 76 [henceforth: BW], p. 160.

[28] BW, p. 178.

[29] Cfr., P.e., M. Heidegger, *Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft*, GA 1, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1978, p. 424: «In the theory of relativity, as a physical theory, it is the problem of measuring time not of time itself. The concept of time remains intact: it confirms, to an even

With regards to the relationship between «classical» and «statistical physics», the latter meaning quantum mechanics, whose statements are probabilistic and not deterministic, Heidegger declares: «the question of which objectuality corresponds to the statistical mode of representation and the question of how this should be unified with the classical, the question as to whether a fundamental reflection on the *truth* of the classical project and its thrownness, which is now slowly coming to light, remains unposed».[30] As can be seen, Heidegger recognizes a «doubling» (*Doppelung*) of perspectives that implies a problem of unification – an issue that, according to him, is still far from being confronted. However, what is even more interesting is that the opening of this discrepancy, and the consequential need for reunification, brings out that «truth» of classical physics, which the physics itself is no longer able to even suspect.

Indeed, the 'symptom' that calls physics back to itself and its origin is Heisenberg's «indeterminacy relationship»[31]: Heidegger does not give in to the typical 'philosophical' temptation of understanding it as an epistemological affirmation that, for example, would deny the principle of causality or the possibility of the objective knowledge of the world in general. The uncertainty principle «is not philosophical knowledge», but physical knowledge, and «it would be completely misleading to make a theory of knowledge»: «Yet here a question [is] touched on that the traditional theory of knowledge and truth has not envisioned, and not even physics can deal with, the question that emerges in departure from "art" and in general wherever the question of truth is posed: the establishment (*Einrichtung*) – sheltering (*Bergung*) of truth in Being itself ».[32]

The impossibility of simultaneously determining the position and speed of a particle makes explicit the decisive contribution of measurement in the constitution of the Being of a physical entity (as it happens in the case of what is ready-to-hand, which is rendered visible only at the moment where his readiness-to-hand is taken away). This provokes two closely related counterpoints. On the one hand, in

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greater extent, what above has emerged as a characteristic trait of the concept of time of the natural sciences, i.e. the homogeneous and quantitatively determinable character». It is clear in any case that, as Glazebrook correctly points out, Richardson's thesis that in principle Heidegger is basically incapable of recognizing the break of quantum physics with respect to the classical paradigm, must at least be blurred (Th. Glazebrook, *Why read Heidegger on science?*, in Id. (Ed.), *Heidegger on science*, State University of New York Press, 2012, pp. 12–26, p. 17).

[30] BW, p. 179.

[31] Beyond the personal meeting in 1935 (according to KF von Weizsäcker, *Begegnungen in vier Jahrzehnten*, in G. Neske, *Erinnerungen an Martin Heidegger*, Neske, Pfullingen 1977, pp. 239–247), Werner Heisenberg represents for Heidegger a constant and significant interlocutor, as attested by the constant references (for example in the first two essays collected in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, GA 7: *Die Frage nach der Technik and Wissenschaft und Besinnung*, both of 1953). According to P.-A. Miquel (*Heidegger et la physique*, «Noesis», 9, 2005, pp. 103–117), dialogue with Heisenberg influences Heidegger to the point of causing a «change of perspective» and the elaboration of «two definitions of the essence of science that are not compatible with each other» (p. 104).

[32] BW, p. 179.

challenging the claim of classical physics to offer an 'absolute' measurement, which is to say a neutral measurement that is irrelevant to the Being of the entity being measured, the uncertainty principle brings to the fore the ontologically constitutive function of the measurement itself, i.e. the projecting (and not merely observing) character of physics. On the other hand, as Heidegger specifies, «the project contains in itself the reference to measurement and, thus, to the measuring instrument and, with this, to what is earth-laden (*erdhaft*) and, with this, to the *throwness of the individual human*».[33] This is the reason behind Heidegger's affirmation that the uncertainty principle refers to nothing less than art, since it is capable of posing the problem of «establishment–sheltering of truth in Being itself». Following this, he lays out his solution to the problem of the reunification of the two paradigms (classic and statistical), stating that «the project of "nature" […] *is a thrown project*».[34] However, what interests us above all is the emphasis that a concept of 'ontological' scope emerges from within physics, which has to be correctly interpreted. That can be only achieved if this concept is brought back to its proper ground, which is not the ground of the physical entity. It is rather the Dasein.

This is why Heidegger then criticizes the inadequacy of Bohr's interpretation of the Heisenberg principle as being indicative of a sort of fading of the separation between the observing subject and the observed object: the observing subject is, in fact, simply the theoretical counterpart of the object and thus fits perfectly into the framework of the mathematical project of classical physics. The *Dasein*, which also has a constitutive relationship with this object – and which Heidegger does not hesitate to define as «transcendental»[35] – is another thing.

3   Does Time Not 'Exist'?

Now, if we reconsider, on the basis of what has emerged, the text we quoted at the start of the paper by Carlo Rovelli, the question of confrontation with Heidegger, when substantially bypassed by the author, appears in a very different light. More precisely, it is possible to argue that Heidegger offers valuable conceptual tools to more rigorously state what Rovelli himself attempts to vocalize when he interprets certain ideas of contemporary physics in terms of ordinary language. We could proceed with a very detailed analysis, but it is sufficient here to consider Rovelli's most fundamental and impactful thesis: «The difference between past and future […] in the elementary laws that describe the mechanisms of the world, there is no such

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[33] BW, p. 178.

[34] BW, p. 178. For this reason, and in the light of this text, what Seigfried says should be integrated: «He [Heidegger] learns from Heisenberg that the aim of natural sciences and physics is no longer *die Natur an sich* […], but *die der menschlichen Fragestellung ausgesetzte Natur*»; H. Seigfried, *Autonomy and Quantum Physics*. Nietzsche, *Heidegger and Heisenberg*, «Philosophy of Science», 57, 4, 1990, pp. 619–630, here p. 626.

[35] BW, p. 180.

difference».[36] In essence: time, as we understand it for the most part, in 'reality' – that reality we can investigate in a scientifically rigorous way only with the instruments of physics – does not 'exist'. Our world, to use the suggestive words of Rovelli, is «an empty, windswept landscape almost devoid of all trace of temporality».[37] In addition, physics «is an attempt to understand and lend coherent meaning to this extreme and beautiful landscape».[38]

If in the equations that account for the fundamental physical phenomena (particle movements, gravity, electromagnetism), the variable 'time' does not appear, this means that from the 'physical' point of view time, as we understand it, has the same (in)consistency as the movement of the sun revolving around the earth: it is an illusion that is not reflected in the 'scientific' description of what happens. As a result it is demolished what seems to be a fundamental trait of our experience – the continuous flow, the incessant transition from one state to another, the continuous ousting of the past by the present, and the inevitable progress of everything toward its end. Rovelli helps the reader become familiar with the need for a concept of «crumbling» time, guiding it in a path that shows how the idea of linear succession between 'before' and 'after' should be corrected by images of gradually increasing complexity (the «cone of light» being the decisive one) in an attempt to bring the intuition closer to the strangeness of space-time: a substantially un-representable 'object' of contemporary physics which is derived from the shattering of universal time into a myriad of «proper times»: «Our "present" does not extend throughout the universe. It is like a bubble around us […]. The idea that a well-defined *now* exists throughout the universe is an illusion, an illegitimate extrapolation of our own experience».[39]

To account for this structural curvature of a time-bubble around a central «now», Rovelli appeals, among other things, to an illuminating interpretation of the second principle of thermodynamics. The principle states that entropy grows or remains the same, but never decreases: the consequence is that heat can only pass from warm to cold bodies, *but not vice versa*. This relation – technically: $\Delta S \geq 0$, where S indicates entropy – is the only one that introduces an asymmetry, a direction, and a path between physical events, and therefore it is the only one that makes – or rather it *seems* to make – the need to resort to the arrow of time necessary. The universe seems to evolve from less probable states to more probable states, such as from order to disorder: it therefore seems to march toward its own end, the thermal death. Rovelli, however, points out that the improbability, or the order, of a state is not an objective quantity at all. It is true that if we mix a deck of cards, it would be highly unlikely that we will eventually get a sequence ordered by suit and by number; and yet that kind of sequence is special and would be 'meaningful', only from the point of view for which that sequence 'appears' ordered. In reality, any sequence has the same degree of probability of presenting itself and therefore, as would be the case

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[36] OT, pp. 27–28/p. 21.

[37] OT, p. 15/p. 4.

[38] OT, pp. 15–16/pp. 4–5.

[39] OT, pp. 43–44/p. 43–44.

here, it would not make sense to speak of an 'arrow' oriented toward disorder: the cards go from an ordered (or disordered) state to a state that it has the same degree of order (or disorder), without any possibility of distinguishing one from the other in terms of a succession from a first (less entropy) to a later stage (more entropy). Consequently, the possibility of tracing a direction depends on a selection operation that favors a state (assigning it an order and therefore granting it a 'meaning') with respect to all the others (which are in fact equivalent in that they have no intrinsic meaning). This selection, which makes us consider only some aspects of what we observe and barring others, is what Rovelli calls «blurring», that is the intrinsic limitation of the gaze that prevents it from taking into account all the characteristics of a certain state and therefore favoring some aspects over others: «entropy exists because we describe the world in a blurred fashion […] entropy is precisely the quantity that counts *how many* are the different configurations that our blurred vision does *not* distinguish».[40] In a certain sense, time arises from this notion: «all the phenomena that characterize the flowing of time are reduced to a "particular" state in the world's past, the "particularity" of which may be attributed to the blurring of our perspective».[41] In short, time is a sort of perspective effect: «The initial law entropy of the universe, and hence the arrow of time, may be more down to us than to the universe itself. This is the basic idea».[42] This means that «we begin to see that we are time».[43]

At this point, it is difficult to hold back a sense of surprise: the assonance between this thesis and the 'humanization' of time which, as we saw at the beginning, the author imputes to Heidegger, leaps to one's eyes. Rovelli does not seem to notice it or he does not give weight to this convergence. This is probably a sign of the fact that Heidegger's position is not taken seriously in its 'ontological' ambition, but is considered the result of a preliminary (and not very interesting) restriction of the gaze to the human being, who deliberately sets aside reflection on the world and on being in general. The missed comparison provokes an almost paradoxical effect: not suspecting the existence of a language that is different from that of traditional ontology, the physicist ends up running into the same error that is assigned to the philosopher. Indeed, as time is not cosmological, it is reduced to a simple «psychological» fact: «Perhaps the emotion of time is precisely what time *is* for us».[44] Yet, if so, then this time, this «emotion» – the term clearly denounces the surrender to any epistemological rigor – is necessarily illusory, because the truth is something else. Truth is only what physics teaches us: «It is hard to take in the idea that an electron behaves in such a bizarre way. It is even more difficult to digest that this is also the

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[40] OT, p. 35/p. 32.

[41] OT, p. 37/p. 34.

[42] OT, p. 128/p. 147.

[43] OT, p. 170/p. 202.

[44] OT, p. 170/p. 201.

way time and space behave. And yet, according to all the evidence, this is the way the quantum world works: the world that we inhabit».[45]

Yet, what exactly does the statement that we «inhabit» a quantum world mean?[46] Heidegger's language makes it possible to more convincingly 'say' what emerges from the analysis of Rovelli, because it is liberating with respect to the reductionism that (apart from the explicit intentions of Rovelli) his analysis assumes – the reductionism which affirms without hesitation that the world of life «is» the quantum world, without suspecting 'ontological' differences in nature. Consider, for example, what Rovelli calls «blur», the limitation of the gaze from which the irreversibility that gives a physical meaning to time is derived: it can certainly be understood as an effect of perspective that is not able to grasp that 'in reality', in the world, in which this 'subjectivization' does not own a rigorous status, time is nowhere. Or, it can be understood as one of the ways in which, from the inside of the discourse of physics, the character of project and thrownness emerges which physics, *volens nolens*, is forced to reckon with. Physics is forced to admit its provenance from a gesture of opening that precedes it and that is expressed in modeling, reduction, manipulation; a gesture into the consequences of which physics runs and which for physics is an appeal to move beyond itself and to intertwine with philosophy. However, this does not at all mean a denial that physics rigorously describes – in the only rigorous way possible – how things are in the world that it investigates, because the project of Being of the physical entity is not an arbitrary invention of the Dasein that moves freely in its own dream universe: a project is not thrown for no reason, it is structurally bound to the earth (*erdhaft*). It simply means understanding that the absence of time that physics discovers when proceeding with the instruments which are fundamentally included in the project itself opens space for the entity that is *not* Dasein, the mode of Being which is *not* that of the unique entity whose Being is time.

To rephrase this: physics, at least in the first instance, by method and almost by definition, supports the traditional meaning of the verb 'being', that for which it establishes an integral translatability between the elements that it gathers around itself. If something *is* something else, it means that the first term can 'run through' the second, and overturn it without residue. The judgment of the form «S is p», for example: «Socrates is mortal», is basically a release that legitimizes the translation of 'S' in terms of 'p', and the understanding of Socrates in respect to his mortality. Saying 'is' basically means establishing an equation, and recognizing an identity and a symmetry that can then turn out to be partial, inadequate, and provisional. However, as long as you say 'is' this is not what matters, this is not what is brought forward as most important. What counts is the intersection between S and p, between

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[45] OT, p. 81/p. 90.

[46] For a general approach to the question, which seriously takes a phenomenological reflection on the world of life as a possible key to the philosophical reading of the world image that emerges from quantum mechanics, N. Argentieri's work will be extremely useful. Ci sono elettroni nel mondo-della-vita? Esperienza, matematica e realtà. Una lettura fenomenologica dell'epistemologia di Werner Heisenberg, Bonanno, Rome 2009.

Socrates and mortality (his mortal being), which until they say 'is', are placed on the same plane. Now, time is at its core an asymmetry, which, by definition, is the exact opposite of translation and the passage that the verb 'to be' endorses. After all, the well-known philosophical aporia of time[47] stems from this structural incompatibility between time and being. That physics proceeds by equations and that in equations there is no place for a variable like time essentially denotes a tautology (and it is not by chance that the only trace of irreversibility, as Rovelli recalls, is expressed in the form of an inequality). Heidegger's thinking, from this point of view, is nothing more than an attempt to reconsider the concept of 'Being' in such a way as to make it welcoming toward time and the irreversibility that it brings with it. Indeed, it is not by chance that this attempt begins with the denunciation of an asymmetry within the Being itself, which introduces a way or a 'meaning' that cannot be crossed in both directions indifferently: the Being is *not* an entity, it is not anything that is, that is: being *is* time.

This original inequality does not ground, substitute or contest the equations on which science is based: rather, it supports them, opening up a wider space that allows science to reach beyond itself and grasp the extent in which it has a scope that it is not only scientific and cannot be said only in terms of science. In this way, it can work on its own, mobile borders, allowing it to recognize, for example, the possibility that the non-existence of time in the physical world indicates – that is to say, *means* – that time, the Being that is time, is the only 'thing' that we can truly say that 'exists': it exists in the sense of Dasein.

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[47] What is time, if the past is no longer, the future has yet to occur, and the present is only for a moment?

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Tertium datur. Time as Meditation in Kant and Heidegger

Marcello Barison

Abstract This paper argues that in both Kant and Heidegger the relation between thought and the world is possible only by means of the transcendental mediation of time. Where is the difference, then, between Kant's and Heidegger's temporal ontology? Whereas for Kant the schema is a "product of the imagination", and thus a product of a transcendental faculty of the subject, for Heidegger the three temporal ecstases of transcendence are simply a neutral, structural articulation of the relation between *Dasein* and world. They are not a product of subjectivity – least of all can they be brought back to the transcendental constitution of a consciousness.

Keywords Heidegger · Kant · Time · *Dasein* · Transcendental · Temporality · Mediation

1 Problem Statement: The Position of Thought Toward World

In this paper, I will discuss the relation between thought and the world. The main thesis I would like to propose is that this relation cannot be conceived without assuming time as transcendental mediation between these two fundamental dimensions: the field of intellectual conceptualization and the phenomenal domain of entities.

The entirety of human effort in defining a consistent system of knowledge, across a wide variety of disciplines, can be summarized as the attempt to identify a coherent *law of correspondence* between conceptual modeling and the determinate 'reality' to which it is referred. This law of correspondence must be able to explain how it is possible that a specific theoretical structure can be applied to 'something' that, in some respects, reveals itself as having a different ontological constitution, thus expressing an 'ontological alterity' irreducible to its conceptual representation.

M. Barison (✉)
University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

A possible exemplification of this same issue can be found in the classic episte-mological problem which questions whether a scientific theory—for instance, quan-tum mechanics—is a proper, intrinsic description of the physical behavior of matter, thereby stating that a scientific theory gives expression to the 'real,' immanent struc-ture of natural phenomena, or—on the contrary—it is just an efficacious approxi-mation, a separate and conventional representation, whose articulation exists only in our mind and falls within the abstract sphere of thought and ideas.[1]

At the beginning of his *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*, with the section on *Preliminary conception*, Hegel presents what he calls the three "positions of thought towards objectivity."[2] Roughly speaking, this expression was elaborated to mean: the positions that thought can assume while thinking—i.e., theoretically confronting—what is phenomenologically offered to its 'grip.' The three different positions of thought toward objectivity (*Objektivität*) are thus three different ways in which thought can relate to the world, i.e., the whole of entities (*Gegen-stände*) which stands out in front of and against the thinking subject.

In order to clearly elucidate the stakes of my argument—and to fully appreciate the originality of Kant's position afterwards—I will now briefly recall the three positions that were singled out by Hegel.

1. The *first position* is characterized by the philosopher as "*naïve*," and consists of the assumption that the content of sensations and intuitions is completely identi-cal with the respective content of thought. This position, then, regards "[…] the thought-determinations as the *fundamental determinations* of things."[3] According to this presupposition, it would mean that "what *is*, by being *thought*, is known in *itself*."[4] In virtue of this position, the thought-determinations are consequently perfectly coherent with the objective, intrinsic structure of the worldly phenom-ena. To quote Spinoza: "Ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum"—"The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and con-nection of things."[5] Thus, when taking this point into consideration with regards to my argument—i.e., the relation between thought and the world—it has to be noticed that *thought* is the decisive and overriding factor in the relation. Everything that is, is already given as thought-determination.

2. The *second position* of thought toward objectivity is in turn divided into two typologies: empiricism and critical philosophy. Whereas I will propose my own

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[1] On this classic issue, cf. R. N. Boyd, "On the Current Status of the Issue of Scientific Realism," in *Erkenntnis*, 1983, 19, pp. 45–90; Id., "What Realism Implies and What it Does Not," in *Dialectica*, 1989, 43, pp. 5–29.

[2] Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. by K. Brinkmann and D. O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), §§ 19–78, pp. 47–125. For a closer examination of this issue, and with regard to Kant's critical philosophy, see T. Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 91–97.

[3] *Ibid.*, § 28, p. 68.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] B. Spinoza, *Ethica*, II, 7.

interpretation of critical philosophy later in the paper, it is of crucial to recognize that, according to Hegel's view, empiricism proposes a paradigm which is diametrically opposed to the naïve one I have just discussed. Empiricism, in fact, arises from "[…] the need for a *concrete* content, in contrast to the abstract theories of the understanding […] Instead of looking for the true within thought itself, empiricism sets out to fetch it from *experience*, the inwardly and outwardly present."[6] In this case, it should be noted that *experience* is the decisive and overriding factor in the relation between thought and the world. A correct comprehension of the phenomena would thus be possible through remaining faithful to the primacy of the sensible perception with the aim of a systematic articulation of knowledge.

3. The *last position* of thought toward objectivity is known as *immediate knowing*. This third paradigm can be interpreted as the synthesis of the previous two. If a metaphysical primacy of thought is affirmed in the first position, and if an argument is made for the empirical primacy of sensible experience in the second position, both the poles of the relation—namely thought and world—would be conceived as equal, co-originary and unified. However, their unification is an immediate one, that is to say: an abstract unity is at stake, which is posited without having gone through any dialectical process, and which is thereby posited as an immediate knowing rather than mediated concreteness. As Hegel elaborates: "In this way, then, it is immediately claimed that only the idea *mediated* by being and, conversely, only the being *mediated* by the idea *is the true*. The proposition of immediate knowing rightly seeks not the indeterminate, empty immediacy, the abstract being or pure unity for itself, but instead the unity of *the idea* with being."[7] Parmenides' fragment, "το γαρ αυτό νοείν εστίν τε και είναι"—"for thinking and being are the same"[8]—is perhaps the most eminent example of this third position.

There are hence three main theoretical patterns which describe how the relation between world and thought can be articulated. As has been made explicit with the reference to Parmenides, this relation can be described using, instead of 'thought' and 'world', the equivalent terms of thinking ("νοείν") and being ("είναι"). Every single position, thus, represents a different way of conceiving the connection—if one is required—between the plane of thought and the plane of being. Indeed, outside of this fundamental connection, no philosophy is possible. To propose a philosophical system—one that is independent from the specific theoretical characteristics it will assume—means to decide unequivocally for a peculiar form of relation between thinking and being in the first instance. Indeed, the type of relation would

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[6] G. W. F. HEGEL, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic*, § 37, p. 78.

[7] *Ibid.*, § 69, p. 119.

[8] PARMENIDES, B 3 (DIELS-KRANZ), in *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy. The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics* (2 vol. set), translated and edited by D. W. Graham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), I, p. 212.

establish which kind of correspondence—i.e., which kind of metaphysics—is actually at stake.

According to what I have illustrated so far, it is possible to infer two different considerations:

1. The fundamental structure which is the foundational basis for every philosophical system is always determined as the relation between *two* essential elements: thought and being. *Tertium non datur*: no third term is given.
2. The three different positions of thought toward being can be summed up as follows:

    (a) The primacy of thought over being.[9] All that is present is preliminarily included in the theoretical horizon of thought.
    (b) The primacy of being over thought. What can be thought always derives from a preliminary form of experience.
    (c) The immediate unity of being and thought. Being and thought are co-originary and no one is subordinated to the other.

With reference to this tripartite framework, I will analyze Kant's fundamental position in order to find out the extent in which it can be reduced to one of these three metaphysical options. Secondly, it will be necessary to ascertain whether there is no place for a third element which would be able to break the ontological diarchy established by the dyad of being and thought in Kant's critical philosophy.

2   The Position of Thought Toward Being in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

According to Hegel, the position of critical philosophy toward being (in the sense of being objectively present) can be described as a position where, unlike empiricism, experience is necessary but *still insufficient* to yield knowledge: "On the one hand, it is through the categories that mere perception is elevated to the level of objectivity, to the level of *experience*; but, on the other hand, these concepts, taken as unities of subjective consciousness only, are conditioned by the given material."[10] Hegel's formulation is nothing but an appropriate interpretation of Kant's remarkable claim, according to which "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."[11] In this respect, however, no significant difference seems to appear

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[9] Needless to say that with *being* here, I do not comprehend the Heideggerian, 'ontological' concept of being, but rather the *ontic* one, that is to say: being as the totality of 'inworldly' entities.

[10] G. W. F. HEGEL, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic*, § 43, p. 88.

[11] I. KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 193–194 ("Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer, Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind" (KW III (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft I*), A 51/B 75, p. 98). For a discussion

between this paradigm and the fundamental diarchy I have previously discussed: the essential structure of knowledge lies in a constitutive relation between two irreducible realms: thought and experience: "our *apriori* concepts of objects"[12]—that is to say: the transcendental constitution of subjectivity –, and the sensible material that is apprehended through perception.

I will not argue that this view is wrong, but it would seem at least *incomplete*. In order to display the nature of this incompleteness, I will now take into account an excerpt from Kant's famous presentation of the doctrine of transcendental schematism. First, I will cite the entire passage, before concentrating on an analysis of its individual components.

> In all subsumptions of an object under a concept the representation of the former must be *homogeneous* with the latter, i.e., the concept must contain that which is represented in the object that is to be subsumed under it […].
>
> Now pure concepts of the understanding, however, in comparison with empirical (indeed in general sensible) intuitions, are entirely unhomogeneous, and can never be encountered in any intuition. Now how is the *subsumption* of the latter under the former, thus the *application* of the category to appearances possible […]?
>
> Now it is clear that there must be a third thing, which must stand in homogeneity with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter. This mediating representation must be pure (without anything empirical) and yet *intellectual* on the one hand and *sensible* on the other. Such a representation is the *transcendental schema*.[13]

A staggering passage, and perhaps of the most remarkable in the history of philosophy[14]—but also an unfathomable one, since Kant himself has admitted that the schematism "[…] is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul […],"[15] whose essence will remain to us—at least partially—concealed.

I will seek to analytically reconstruct the philosopher's argument. Kant's problem is as follows: how is it possible that the pure concepts of the understanding—i.e., the *a priori* structures of our subjectivity—'fit' the sensible material of experience? Why should they be formally suited to the content of our sensible intuition? The *a priori* forms of sensibility (space and time) and of the understanding (the categories) could indeed be completely 'unmatched,' and inapplicable to the empirical content of perception. We can represent the problem through utilizing the image of a jigsaw puzzle. With a jigsaw, not all the tessellating pieces interlock: for

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of this passage, see P. KITCHER, *Kant's Transcendental Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 110–111. On this issue, see also the classic discussion in C. KNÜFER, *Grundzüge der Geschichte des Begriffs,Vorstellung' von Wolff bis Kant* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999²), p. 82.

[12] *Ibid.*, A 12/B 25, p. 133.

[13] *Ibid.*, A 137/B 177, pp. 271–272.

[14] For a coherent reconstruction of Kant's argument in his *Doctrine of Transcendental Schematism*, see H. MÖRCHEN, *Die Einbildungskraft bei Kant* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1970²), pp. 42–129. On the same issue, see also M. WUNSCH, *Einbildungskraft und Erfahrung bei Kant* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 84–130.

[15] *Ibid.*, A 141/ B 181, p. 273.

each piece there is actually just one fitting position in the tiling composition. Moreover, the jigsaw puzzle gives shape to a coherent global image only if all the pieces are in the right place, with each interlocking with its proper joints. In the same way, critical philosophy has stated that there is universal and well-grounded knowledge *if and only if* the *a priori* forms are 'interlocking'—finding an alignment—with the sensible content of experience; as with a jigsaw puzzle, the finite mosaic of critical knowledge is based on a formal, unavoidable law of correspondence which allows the 'fitting together' of the pure concepts of the understanding and their respective application material.

In the second paragraph of the passage quoted, Kant points out a further specification of the problem: concepts and empirical intuitions that are irreducibly alien and unassimilable with each other. They are thus "entirely unhomogeneous," which would mean: constitutionally different. For this reason, "the application of the category to appearances" seems to be prohibited: the transcendental structures of thought do not 'fit' our phenomenological experience of the world. The question thus becomes how would it be possible for us to overcome this arduous aporia? How is it possible to make the two 'joints'—thought and world—interlock?

This is Kant's extraordinary solution, his revelation that "there must be a third thing." In order to connect and to 'match' the concepts and entities, a third intermediate element has to be introduced. This μεταξύ ("in-between" or, more literally, "together-with"—recalling a Platonic expression[16]), or this medium must be homogeneous to both the transcendental realm of thought and to the empirical domain of worldly entities.

It should also be noted that Kant's introduction of a third term contradicts what I have detected with regards to the main characteristic of each position of thought toward objectivity. With regards to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it would be false to assume that the fundamental structure which lays the bases for every philosophical system is always determined as the relation between *two* essential elements. *Tertium datur*—a third term is given by Kant, defined as "the *transcendental schema*." Consequently, it has to be shown what the character of this "*schema*" is and how it is able to make the application of concepts to the material of the sensible intuition possible.

A plausible way toward understanding the role of the schema is to explain it using the image of a coin. To demonstrate how his would work, let us make a structural analysis of the idiomatic expression "two sides of the same coin."

A coin is composed of two sides that are divided by a metal thickness. One side of the coin normally carries the image of an institutional authority or a national emblem, and is sometimes called the obverse, or—colloquially—heads. The other side, on which may be impressed the denomination, is called the reverse—or tails. From a semiotic point of view, therefore, a coin is a very interesting object which can be described as a cylindrical metal *bearer* (or *carrier*)—a specific material *support*—which puts into connection two separate and distinct semiotic entities: an

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[16] Cf. PLAT. *Symp.*, 203 b-c.

image on the one hand and a denomination on the other. Heads and tails could not be superimposed—otherwise they would appear just as *one* intricate, unintelligible image. The metal thickness in-between, hence, is the *condition of possibility* of *both* the distinction *and* the connection between the two different sides of the same coin. As such, three points have to be highlighted:

(a) Heads and tails can be two sides of the *same* coin only by virtue of the medium that separates them. In other words: the spatial thickness of the coin—its spatial *extension*—is the condition of possibility of their relation, as well as the condition for them not to overlap.
(b) The coin consists, firstly, of its metal thickness. Due to its spatial extension, it also has material consistency. Without this substantial character, it would not be able to serve as a support or a bearer (*Träger*) able to host two different images, i.e., able to receive a double, symmetrical mintage.
(c) In a coin, one side can carry the head of a king, and the other side the denomination of his official role, or of the dynasty to which he belongs. Since these two semiotic elements are impressed on the same coin, we automatically put them into relation, referring the inscription (the denomination) *to* the figure in effigy (the head of the king). Due to its double-faced structure, the thick extension of the coin establishes a precise correspondence between two different, unhomogeneous kinds of signs: an inscription and an image. A coin can thus be described as a specific *transformation matrix* which can convert one language into another, setting up a relation between two different semiotic types. Indeed, the coin holds the function of an electrical plug adapter (Fig. 16.1), a device—a transformation matrix—which converts attributes of one device or system to allow it to integrate with another otherwise incompatible device or system.
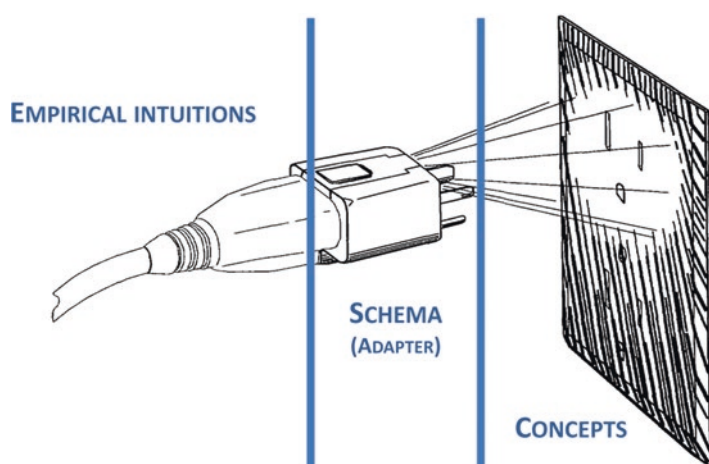
Fig. 16.1 The schema as a transformation matrix

The coin is an extended and material adapter that connects these two other-
wise incompatible semiotic entities: the inscription and the image which are
indeed "sides of the same coin." Being homogeneous to both, the coin, a as
bearer, can successfully serve as a transformational mediator between them.

Consequently, it is clear in my example the coin stands for the transcendental
schema which acts as an adapter between thought and the world: on the one side
stand pure concepts of the understanding, while on the other side stand the empiri-
cal intuitions.

In order to ground my argument, I will now show how, *mutatis mutandis*, the
properties of the double-faced coin correspond to those of the transcendental schema.

(a') *Spatial extension*.[17] According to Kant "[…] the *schema* of sensible concepts
(such as figures in space) is a product and as it were a monogram of pure *a
priori* imagination […]."[18] I will discuss later, upon introducing the question of
time, the role of productive imagination within the transcendental schematism.
For now, it would be important to recognize that the schema is described as "a
monogram," that is to say: a figural motif obtained by the combination of two
or more graphemes. As with the coin, the schema also pertains a spatial exten-
sion. A "monogram," though, is not an image, and Kant distinguishes these two
terms—schema and image—as follows: "Now this representation of a general
procedure of the imagination for providing a concept with its image is what I
call the schema for this concept."[19] In order to understand the difference between
schema and image, it is worth introducing a mathematical example. The differ-
ence between schema and image is equivalent to that, in analytical geometry,
being between the algebraic form of a function and its representation in a
Cartesian coordinate system. Let us consider the function of a circle. If the cir-
cumference is centered at the origin (0, 0), then its equation is: $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$. This
equation is universally valid for every circle that is centered at the origin.
However, if we want to represent the specific case of a circle that has a radius of
value 2, what we obtain is a determinate image of the function (Fig. 16.2)—the
one we have if the radius measures actually 2.

Thus, the general function gives us the structural formula that we have to
follow to draw up *every* circle which is centered at the origin; the single represen-
tation (with $r = 2$), on the contrary, is just one possible image the function can
take when represented. In the same way, the schema is the "representation of a
general procedure:" it is a sort of 'general equation,' like the algebraic
"representation"—in this case: formulation—of a function, whereas the image is
nothing but its determinate, 'geometrical' figuration on the Cartesian system.

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[17] Cf. K. R. WESTPHAL, *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 2004), p. 136: "[…] Kant states that the schema of substance is 'permanence of the real in
time' (A144/B183), and he repeatedly stresses the role of the permanent in appearance throughout
the Analogies. Later in the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection, Kant stresses a point, espe-
cially important here, about the role of the permanent in appearance. The permanent in appearance
is to be found only in space […], and it is directly associated with *spatial* extension."

[18] I. KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 181/A 142, pp. 273–274.

[19] *Ibid.*, A 140/B 180, p. 273.
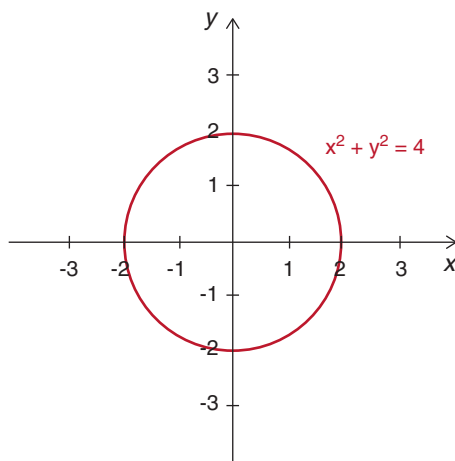
Fig. 16.2 Function on a Cartesian Plane

What Kant calls "a monogram" is indeed comparable to the algebraic form of a function, the general 'composition code'—i.e., the schema—which contains the procedure by means of which the imagination can produce an image (which is thus a respective determinate image that is generated from *that* specific schema). The schema as a "monogram," thus as 'procedural' function, is identical to what, in the example of the coin, I have called a transformation matrix. As image—once it has been transposed into an image on the bases of its procedural function—the schema becomes extended and assumes a spatial connotation. Returning to the example of the coin, I would say that if the thick extension of the coin stands for the image, the schema is represented by the fact that, as a transformation matrix, the bearing coin is carrying out the function of connecting two otherwise incompatible semiotic entities: heads and tails—the two separate sides.

(b') *The sensible character of the schema.*[20] Due to its spatial extension, the coin would indubitably have a material consistency—but what about the schema? "This mediating representation must be pure (without anything empirical) and yet *intellectual* on the one hand and *sensible* on the other."[21] As a mediator, the schema must participate in both the domains that it connects: the transcendental sphere of pure concepts and the empirical one of the perceived material world. Thus, as *tertium datur*, it is jointly transcendental *and* sensible.

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[20] On the sensible character of the schema, conceived as a "[…] *representation* […] that Kant requires be on the one hand 'pure', in other words emptied of all the empirical element, and on the other hand 'sensible', in other words homogeneous with the empirical element" (p. 133), see G. DIDI-HUBERMAN, *Devant l'image. Questions posées aux fins d'une histoire de l'art* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990), trans. by J. Goodman, *Confronting Images. Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 2005, pp. 132–138.

[21] *Ibid.*, B 177, p. 272.

(c') *Homogeneity (*Gleichartigkeit*).*[22] As with the coin, the schema, which is together intellectual and sensible, is homogeneous to both the material dimensions of experience and the realm of pure understanding. The essential homogeneous character that the schema expresses is hence a consequence of its role as a double-faced mediator.

What is it, then, that makes this double homogeneity of the schema to both sensible things and pure concepts possible? Up till this point, I have just shown *how* the schema works as an adapter, or rather, as a transformation matrix for connecting—by virtue of schematic images—thought and world. Yet, *why* is this mediation possible, and why does the schema succeed in providing the mentioned connection—this is something our analysis has yet to fully elaborate upon. In order to address this issue, I have to make a further step regarding the question of time in Kant's doctrine of transcendental schematism.

3   The Mediation of Time

I will introduce the question of time by quoting a passage from the schematism chapter of the *Critique*. Here Kant writes:

> Time, as the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense, thus of the connection of all representations, contains an *a priori* manifold in pure intuition. Now a transcendental time-determination is homogeneous with the *category* (which constitutes its unity) insofar as it is *universal* and rests on a rule *a priori*. But it is on the other hand homogeneous with the *appearance* insofar as *time* is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold.[23]

We are taken to the core of the question. Time is homogeneous to both sensible things and pure concepts. *This homogeneity (*Gleichartigkeit*), as the fundamental quality of the mediation between thought and the world, is essentially a temporal one.* However, if the term that implements and carries out the mediation is the schema, this means that the schema too is of temporal 'nature.' The schema—writes Kant—"is a transcendental product of the imagination."[24] In which way, though, would it be produced by the imagination? The schema "[…] concerns the determination of the inner sense in general, in accordance with conditions of its form (time) […]."[25] The schema, then, is clearly said to be a determination of the form of inner sense. Yet, "form of inner sense"[26] is Kant's definition of time in § 6 of his *Transcendental Aesthetics*. The schema is thus nothing but *a determination of time—a temporal determination* produced by the imagination. *The schema is the*

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[22] On the con concept of *Gleichartigkeit*, cf. H. COHEN, *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (Berlin: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung), 1871, p. 179.

[23] *Ibid.*, B 177/B 178/A 139, p. 272.

[24] *Ibid.*, A 142, p. 274.

[25] *Ibid.*, A 142, p. 274.

[26] *Ibid.*, A 33, p. 163.

*concrete function by means of which critical knowledge of the world takes place through time (or better: "*κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν*"—"[…] according to the ordering of time"*[27]*).* In Kant's words: "[…] an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental time-determination which, as the schema of the concept of understanding, mediates the subsumption of the latter under the former."[28]

I have suggested earlier that we conceive the schema as similar to that of an algebraic function. Now this analogy can be appreciated even more: while it is true that a function is something which can develop within time, its algebraic equation is nevertheless a static determination. A schema is thus what determinates the function of time—a temporal "monogram," a composition code—whose extended figuration is the image by means of which a concept can be applied to the sensible intuitions.

However, this general theoretical framework needs further specification, particularly one which we can put in the form of a question: why this *primacy of time*? Why, precisely, must time be the fundamental mediator between categories and entities? Time, states Kant, is "homogeneous" both "with the *category*" and "with the *appearance*."[29] The first part of this claim is not difficult to clarify: according to the *Transcendental Aesthetics*, time is a "pure intuition." As categories, which are also called "pure concepts," time is an *a priori* form—and hence an *a priori* condition of all possible appearances. However, space is also an *a priori* condition of all possible *Erscheinungen*. Why, then, is not space the fundamental mediator between categories and entities? Why, according to Kant, would the schema be a temporal rather than spatial determination? In order to get a better understanding of this unavoidable issue, we have to tackle what Martin Heidegger, in his well-known interpretation of Kant, calls the "preeminence" of time "over space."[30]

In the *Transcendental Aesthetics*, both space and time are said to be "not an empirical concept"[31] and an *a priori* "necessary representation."[32] What distinguishes them is that while space is "[…] the form for all appearances of outer sense […],"[33] time—as I have already recalled—"[…] is nothing other than the form of inner sense, i.e., of the intuition of our self and our inner state."[34] Space, moreover, is 'only' "[…] an *a priori* representation that necessarily grounds outer appearances,"[35] whereas "time is a necessary representation that grounds all

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[27] Anaximander, B 1 (Diels-Kranz), in *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy. The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics*, I, p. 51.

[28] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 139, p. 272.

[29] *Ibid.*, B 177/B 178/A 139, p. 272.

[30] M. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. by R. Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991⁵), § 10, p. 34. M.

[31] Cf. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 38, B 46, p. 157, p. 162.

[32] *Ibid.*, A 24, A 31, p. 158, p. 162.

[33] *Ibid.*, A 26/B 42, p. 159.

[34] *Ibid.*, A 33, p. 163.

[35] *Ibid.*, B 39, p. 158.

intuitions […] In it alone is all actuality of appearances possible."[36] Now the question which has to be answered would read as follows: how is it possible that time, the "form of inner sense," is "a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions," while space, the "form […] of outer sense", is a necessary representation that "grounds" *only* "outer appearances"? In other words: how can time, as the "form of inner sense," ground not *just* inner but *also* outer appearances?

According to Kant, every experience, including the experience of an outer appearance, is actually a subjective experience. In order to be known, every appearance must be represented *inside* the subject. Resultantly, we do not have any 'outer representation' of an outer object; what we have is always an *inner* representation of an outer object. However, the act of representing, as a subjective inner act, responds necessarily to time as "the form of inner sense." That means that we will always have an inner, temporal representation of an outer, spatial appearance. Using Heidegger's words, "by the digression into the immediate within-time-ness of representing, a mediate within-time-ness of what is represented, i.e., of those 'representations' determined through external sense, is given."[37] This means that our spatial intuition of the objects outside of us is always mediated by an inner temporal representation. In other words: we 'introject' the spatiality of external entities only through the mediation of time as "inner sense." We perceive the external 'objectivity' of spatial entities only through the internal immediateness of time. This is the reason why "time is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions:" as all the outer appearances are represented by the subject only through the mediation of time. In order to be represented, every spatial representation has to first be 'introjected' and temporalized—which explains the primacy of time in Kant's doctrine of transcendental schematism, clarifying once and for all why time—and not space—must be the fundamental mediator between categories and entities. The schema, then, must also be a temporal determination that is produced by the imagination: for only a *temporal* mediation makes the subjective representation of external phenomena possible. Time, indeed, is the original medium that enables the application of pure concepts to sensible intuitions—which would be the same as saying: *being itself is given to thought only by means of the original mediation of time*.

From what has been expounded thus far, I will draw the following conclusions:

(a) My first aim was to define the position of critical philosophy toward objectivity. After having analyzed the role of the transcendental schema and the primacy of time in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I can finally attest that not one of the three positions identified by Hegel would be adequate in describing the Kantian one. This latter consists indeed in a mediated unity of being and thought: being is related to thought by means of the transcendental mediation of time.

(b) *Tertium datur*: a third term is given by Kant, a term which infringes the dualism of the dyad of being and thought. It is through this reasoning that time acquires a role of primary importance: as a necessary third term, it emerges as that

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[36] *Ibid.*, A 31, p. 162.

[37] M. HEIDEGGER, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 10, p. 35.

supreme *ontological* principle, which makes our experience of the world possible. It must thus be assumed as the milestone of every possible ontology. According to Kant's fundamental metaphysical position, time is what establishes and allows the original belongingness of being and thought with each other. This original unity is not an immediate one—as it is in Parmenides: "for thinking and being are the same"[38]—, it is instead mediated by the schematic determination of time and its respective image produced by the *Einbildungskraft* (the transcendental imagination).

With this understanding of the ontological character of time in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and its position of preeminence within Kant's metaphysics, it is not difficult to understand why Heidegger saw a sort of anticipation of his own path of thinking in the doctrine of transcendental schematism—even though still in the framework of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity. An important passage from Heidegger's *Kantbuch* contains a very clear admission of this implicit debt: "The laying of the ground for metaphysics grows upon the ground of time. The question concerning Being, the grounding question for a laying of the ground for metaphysics, is the problem of *Being and Time*."[39] In the last part of this paper, I will discuss how the relation between the *Dasein* and the world in Heidegger's *Being and Time* is definitely homogeneous to the relation between thought and being as conceived by Kant—through means of the transcendental mediation of time.

4   Heidegger's Ecstatical Conception of Time

This paper will not linger on an analytical reconstruction of Heidegger's argument about the relation between *Dasein*, world and time. Rather, I will confine myself to a presentation of what, in that relation, establishes a clear correspondence with Kant's doctrine of the transcendental schematism.[40] In step with my previous reasoning, the critical guideline of my interpretation will be the following question:

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[38] PARMENIDES, B 3 (DIELS-KRANZ), in *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy. The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics*, I, p. 212.

[39] M. HEIDEGGER, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, § 35, p. 141.

[40] Besides Hermann Mörchen's *Die Einbildungkraft bei Kant* (cit.), on Heidegger relation with Kant—and precisely with Kant's doctrine of the transcendental schematism –, see also: R. FINDLER, *The Problem of the Imagination for Subjectivity. Kant and Heidegger on the Issue of Displacement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); W. D. BLATTNER, *Temporal Synthesis and Temporality in Kant and Heidegger* (Ann Arbor: U.M.I, 1989); U. SCHULTZ, *Das Problem des Schematismus bei Kant und Heidegger* (Elmshorn: Koch, 1963); R. TREMBLAY, *Métaphysique et ontologie chez Kant et Heidegger* (Québec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1984); V. PEREGO, *Finitezza e libertà. Heidegger interprete di Kant* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2001); E. MENDIETA, *Heidegger's Existential Analytic as Epistemology: Kant and Heidegger*, in *The Adventures of Transcendental Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littelfield Publishers, 2002), pp. 1–35.

what is *Dasein*'s position toward the world? And what, specifically, is the role of time within this relation—i.e., the relation between *Dasein* and world?

How can it be that the *Dasein* is not shut up in itself and thus enclosed within pure thought, but rather always related to an object and so 'turned' to the world and 'stirred up' by the contents of perception? According to Husserl's phenomenology, the answer given to this question is focused on the concept of *intentionality*. According to its transcendental constitution, consciousness is indeed always and immediately consciousness *of* something. This means that in its primary constitution, consciousness immediately refers to entities outside of its transcendental horizon, and this could be surmised as: the world is already given and posited—contained and achieved—in every ego's noetic act. According to the intentionality structure, consciousness is always and necessarily in connection with the reality of things; these, in fact, are a part of its intentional cognitive field: to the phenomenological subject belongs a fundamental and constitutive reference to an intentional object. This is owing to an "immanent look-towards" which immediately projects the *cogito* to the worldly material of his cognitive experience. This 'pro-jection' can never be absent, that is to say: the world belongs to the original project of the intentional consciousness and is included within its primary phenomenological horizon. Every *cogitatio* has therefore a 'real' content: only because the ego is intentional does the entity give itself within the ego's constitutional horizon. Consequently, the subject is always *by* the entities since he is already directed to the things in the first act of his self-constituting.

Upon criticizing Husserl's phenomenological argument, Heidegger asserts that the intentionality proper to Husserl's phenomenology is not a sufficiently original instance, and cannot rigorously explain the original 'being-by-the-things'—the primitive 'being-disclosed' to entities—of *Dasein*. Heidegger's position is absolutely clear: Husserl's phenomenology fails by subjectively conceiving the encounter with entities according to the form of intentionality. Its structure appears totally 'under-determinate' with respect to the original horizon that is dwelt in by *Dasein* and disclosed to both *Sein* and *Welt*—being and world. The metaphysical-epistemological distinction, which sets a *cogito*-subject against his respective domain of objects, forgets the ontological foundation on whose only basis it is possible. Intentionality does not give an account of the original 'being already by the entities' of *Dasein*, an 'already being there (*da*)' that precedes the intentionality of consciousness. How would it be possible to otherwise think about the original disclosure to entities that characterizes the *Dasein*? Heidegger's answer is clear: "aufgrund einer *vorgängigen* ,Transposition'"—"on the basis of an antecedent 'transposition'."[41] It must be asked, then, which kind of "transposition" is capable of originally 'extroverting' *Dasein* to things? Better yet: how is it possible to radicalize intentionality in an ontological direction, revealing to thought its essential foundation, i.e., what makes it *preliminarily* possible based on the fact that *Dasein*'s

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[41] HGA XXIV (*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*), § 15 c, pp. 229–230 [*The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, trans. and ed. by A. HOFSTADTER (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 161].

"transposition" to the things is already and originally inscribed within the openness of *Da*? Heidegger's answer, which is presented in some of the most important passages of both *Being and Time* and *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, represents the core of the *Daseinsanalyse*: *intentionality is grounded on the transcendence of* Dasein. This is thus originally and already by (*bei*) the things because, according to a fundamental determination of Dasein's ontological (existential) structure, it constitutively transcends *to* them. *Dasein*'s disclosed *Da*—that is, the horizon of its openness—is always ecstatically extroverted—*thrown*—outside of himself; he is, as such, always pro-jecting a world. The latter is not something external, or something which the *Dasein* could 'add' to himself as a secondary element after being transcended. The world discloses itself originally in *Dasein*'s openness: it belongs to *Da-sein*'s existential horizon because no mediation is discovered within his *Da*. Nevertheless, this means that the *Dasein* does not transcend *the* things, just as it does not transcend *vertically beyond* the things, but rather it transcend *horizontally to* the things, disclosing and at the same time acquiring a world.

   Yet, what is the foundation of *Dasein*'s horizontal transcendence to the things, or, in Heidegger's words, "[…] how <is> anything like the world in its unity with *Dasein* […] ontologically possible"[42]? "Having its ground in the horizontal unity of ecstatical temporality, the world is transcendent"[43]—which means: the world is originally disclosed to *Dasein* by virtue of "the horizontal unity of ecstatical temporality." *As with Kant,* Being and Time *highlights that the relation between* Dasein *and world is possible only by means of the transcendental mediation of time. Dasein*'s original "transposition" *to* things, its disclosing transcendence to the world, is grounded on the ecstatical constitution of temporality. Yet, why is it that a three-fold horizontal constitution of temporality—in which *Dasein*'s transcendence to the world is articulated—is said to be ecstatical? The three ecstases—past, present and future—"[…] are not simply raptures in which one gets carried away. Rather, there belongs to each ecstasis a 'whither' to which one is carried away. This 'whither' of the ecstasis we call the 'horizontal schema'."[44] This last passage is an essential one, one in which Heidegger betrays how much his conception owes to Kant's. With Heidegger's *existential schematism* too, the transcendental mediation of time is determined and articulated through schemata. *Dasein*'s transcendence to the world is thus said to be ecstatical because it is existentially constituted by three temporal schemata of past, present and future.

   The following sketch (Fig. 16.3) can thus represent the structural outlines of the position of thought toward the world, according to both Kant and Heidegger:

   Where is the difference, then, between Kant's and Heidegger's *temporal ontology*? Whereas in the case of Kant, the schema is a "product of the imagination,"[45]

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[42] M. HEIDEGGER, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001²¹), § 69 c, p. 415.

[43] *Ibid.*, § 69 c, p. 417.

[44] *Ibid.*, § 69 c, p. 416.

[45] *Ibid.*, A 142, p. 274.
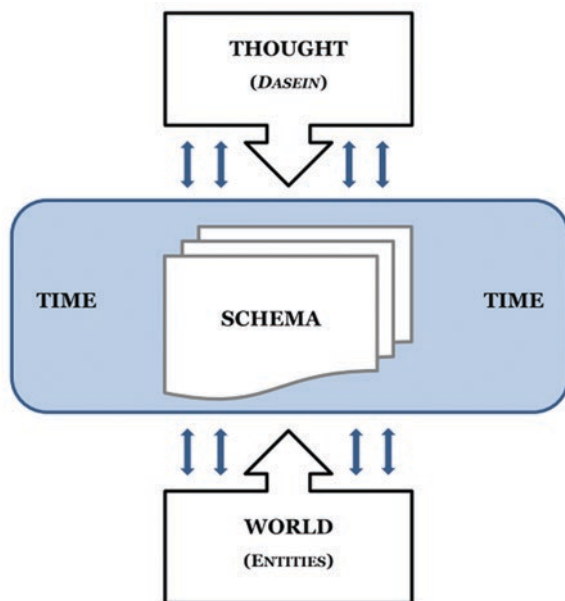
Fig. 16.3 Diagram of the temporal relationship between thought and the world in Kant and Heidegger

and thus a product of a transcendental faculty of the subject, Heidegger presupposes that the three temporal ecstases of transcendence are simply a neutral, structural articulation of the relation between the *Dasein* and world. They are not a product of subjectivity—least of all can they be brought back to the transcendental constitution of a consciousness.

Moreover, if for Kant the unity of *Transcendental Aesthetics* and *Transcendental Schematism* constitutes the totality of his conception of time as subjectively grounded, for Heidegger "the horizontal unity of ecstatical temporality" *only* constitutes the structure of *Zeitlichkeit*—the temporality of *Dasein*—, but not that of *Temporalität*—the temporality of being. With regard to the destinal-epochal (*geschichlich*) temporality of being, the *Daseinsanalyse* only represents a preparatory task, one which cannot exhaust the question of time and may only describe its existential grounding in *Dasein*. What stands for Heidegger as just a starting point, is for Kant the point of arrival.

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